COACH MART

Issue 609 £1

October 11 1990

The leading weekly serving the coach industry

BELGIAN STAR SYSTEM could it work in Britain?

Carlton P.S.V.

STOP PRESS **Our f** **bished Skyliner** is **SOLD** Re-painted white, in N press Rapide livery, re-moquetted, re-tr fully serviced, Z ear hostess seat. A **SOLD** ery & cool box. Acceptable for Rapide wo further 5 years. Cheri tes, Mercedes manual. **SOLD** Stock No.9021. Further examples available short

NEOPLAN

1988 Neoplan Skyliner, 77 seats, Gardner engine, ZF Automatic, radio/PA/cassette, TV/video monitor, VHS recorder, toilet, fridge, drinks. Stock No. 0021

1983/4 Neoplan Skyliner, 71-75 seats, Mercs V10 engine, 6 speed ZF gearbox, toilet. fridge, radio/PA, drinks machine. Stock Nos. 9017 to 9023

1982 Neoplan Skyliner (with cherished plates), Well preserved and maintained, very recently remoquetted (blue) and resprayed (white), 71 recliners, Mercedes V10, 6-speed ZF gearbox, toilet, fridge, drinks machine etc. This vehicle has been in regular daily use — a very clean example. Stock No. 0004.

AEC

1977 PLAXTON EXPRESS, 53 seater, semi-auto gearbox, Bristol dome, white/black exterior, autumn tint moquette. Stock No. 0006.

VOLVO

1984 Volvo B10M Berkhof Esprit **SOLD** , power door, Webasto, curtains, carpets, radio/PA/cassette, MoT 27. No.0016.

1983 VOLVO B10M Jonckheere P599, 49 recliners, Telma, coffee machine, MoT Nov 1990.

1980 VOLVO B58 Air/Leaf Dominant, 12 metre, 53 seats, 48 recliners, 5 fixed, automatic gearbox, power door, tinted windows, curtains, side lockers, MoT Dec 1990. Stock No. 0012

1980 VOLVO B58 11 metre, 51 seats, Alpha power door, Telma, white livery, red moquette and MoT Nov 90. Stock No. 0014.

1979 VOLVO B58 12 metre, 57 seats (re-moquetted), Alpha power door, side lockers, livery white and MoT Feb 91. Stock No. 0015.

MAN

1982 SR 280, 47 recliners, Sutrak air conditioning, 6 speed gearbox, o/s centre power door, o/s centre sunken toilet, driver's bunk, fridge, drinks machine, tinted double glazed windows, Rollo blinds, courier seat, Webasto and timer, seat back nets, headrest covers, wheel discs, driver's locker. Stock No. 0008

SCANIA

1986 Scania Berkhof Eclipse double deck, 76 seats, toilet, double glazed windows, Telma, coffee machine, livery maroon/white. MoT April 1991.

BEDFORD

1981 Bedford YNT 53 seater Plaxton, side lockers, autumn tint moquette, livery white blue/yellow stripes. Reconditioned engine, new MoT Sept 1991. Stock No. M9014.

1980 Bedford PJK, 29 seater, Duple Dom, red, moq, livery white. Stock No. 0007.

1979 Bedford YMT, 53 seater Plaxton, red/cream ext, red moq. Stock No. M9036.

LEYLAND

1982 Leyland Leopard 12 metre Dominant, 51 reclining seats, double glazed, Telma, radio/PA, Bristol dome. MoT Feb 1991. Stock No. 9033.

1982 Leyland Leopard 12 metre Plaxton, 49 seats, semi auto gearbox, toilet, coffee machine, side lockers, new MoT 16.08.91.

1981 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant, 53 seats, red moquette, livery white, new MoT 23.08.91. Stock No. M9012.

1981 Leyland 11 metre Plaxton, 53 (remoquetted), X'Press, side lockers, grey/red moquette, new MoT 29.08.91. Stock No. 9013.

1981 Leyland 12 metre Plaxton, 49 recliners, cream exterior, Autumn tint moquette, new MoT 29.09.91. Stock No. 9010.

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QUALITY COACHES

VOLVO 1986 B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49 recliners, sunken toilet o/s rear, courier seat, curtains, fridge, water boiler, tinted side windows, beige/blue moquette, white+yellow/orange stripes.

VOLVO 1984 (AUGUST) B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49 recliners, beige/red moquette, rear sunken toilet with continental door, driver's berth, courier seat, Webasto heating, TELMA retarder, drinks machine, curtains, tinted double glazing, power entrance door, wired/boxed for T.V./video, silver/blue.

VOLVO 1982 B58 DUPLE DOMINANT IV 12M, 53 recliners, brown moquette, tinted double glazed side windows, curtains, TELMA retarder, air/leaf suspension, automatic chassis lubrication system, cream + brown/grey reliefs.

VOLVO 1981 B58 PLAXTON SUPREME 12M, 49 recliners, brown moquette, toilet at nearside rear, power entrance door, tinted side windows, curtains, white.

VOLVO 1981 B58 DUPLE DOMINANT II 12M, 48 recliners, red moquette, rear n/s saloon toilet, rear servery, curtains, all white.

VOLVO 1980 B58 DUPLE DOMINANT II 11M, 53 str., recently re-trimmed in autumn tint moquette, power entrance door, side lockers, Bristol dome, all white.

VOLVO 1979 (LATE) B58 PLAXTON SUPREME 12M, air/leaf suspension, automatic gearbox, TELMA retarder, 51 recliners, autumn tint moquette, power entrance door, side lockers, all white.

BEDFORD 1986 YNV DUPLE 320 12M, 57 str., power door, grey/yellow moquette, tinted glass, cream/red.

LEYLAND 1985 TIGER 245 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 51 str., autumn tint moquette (46 recliners + 5 fixed at rear), power operated entrance door, TELMA retarder, courier seat, curtains, continental door, provision for driver's berth, all white.

LEYLAND 1984 TIGER 245 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 50 recliners, courier, power entrance door, double glazing, brown stripe moquette, all white. CHOICE OF THREE.

LEYLAND 1982 (AUGUST) TIGER 245 PLAXTON VIEWMASTER 12M, 49 recliners, red/orange moquette, courier seat, power entrance door, tinted side windows, curtains, o/s/r sunken toilet, continental door, water boiler, fridge, wiring for T. V./video, grey/duo green.

LEYLAND 1982 TIGER 245 PLAXTON VIEWMASTER 12M, 49 recliners, green moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental door, double glazing, Webasto heating, driver's berth, aircraft style lockers to luggage racks, water boiler, fridge, T.V. + video wiring, cream/green.

LEYLAND 1981 (OCTOBER) LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME 11M, 53 str. recently retrimmed in grey/red moquette, power operated entrance door, cream/red.

MOSELEY

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BOVA 1985 FUTURA FHD 12.280 Integral 12M, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet with continental door, red moquette, all white.

BOVA 1984 EUROPA III Integral 12M, 49 str., beige/fawn/orange stripe moquette, centre sunken o/s toilet, continental door, wired for two T.V. monitors+video, drinks machine, Webasto heating, courier seat, carpets, power door, all white.

BOVA 1983 EUROPA II Integral 12M, 49 str, (44 recliners + 5 fixed), red moquette, power door, courier seat, curtains, toilet, continental door, TELMA, Webasto, driver's fan, all white.

BOVA 1982 EUROPA II Integral 12M, 52 recliners, red moquette, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, white/blue.

DAF 1984 MB200 DKFL CAETANO ALGARVE 12M, 49 recliners, grey/orange moquette, power door, courier seat, curtains, toilet, wired for T.V./ video, carpet, water boiler, duo red/white.

DAF 1983 (NOVEMBER) DKFL JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P50 12M, 49 recliners, blue moquette, power door, o/s rear sunken toilet with continental door, double glazed tinted windows, Tempo 100, wired T.V./video, Telma retarder, drinks machine, magazine nets, all white.

DAF 1983 (AUGUST) SB2300 DHS JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P599 12M, 51 recliners, centre sunken toilet, Webasto heating, fridge, coffee machine, carpet, curtains, T.V.+video wiring, grey/blue moquette trim, white.

DAF 1983 DKFL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 51 recliners, autumn tint moquette, power door, double glazing, curtains, courier seat, continental door, Webasto, Telma retarder, white/green/black.

DAF 1983 DKFL VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 48 recliners, Autumn tint moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, continental entrance door, white/grey/red.

CONTENTS

COACH MART
Issue 609 October 11, 1990

5 **News:** The King's Ferry drops Spanish Eurolines route; Mick Mullen is back in the minibus business; EC goes for compulsory bonding; Londoners urged to report drivers.

12 **On Target:** Marksman says cash saved from offering price reductions could be used to help improve business; and asks if British Rail is treated better than coach operators.

14 **Fleet Update:** Westways Mini-Buses gets Showbus award; Gatwick Flyer picks Mercedes; DAFs go to AutoSky.

17 **Letters:** Verite Baker hits back at criticism over her London coach parking stance; operators are urged to take action to stop accidents.

20 **Diary:** Mealstop has news of a coach door with a mind of its own; and a mobile 'des res'.

21 **Star System:** Mike Morgan says the star system is the way forward for the British coach industry.
* COVER STORY

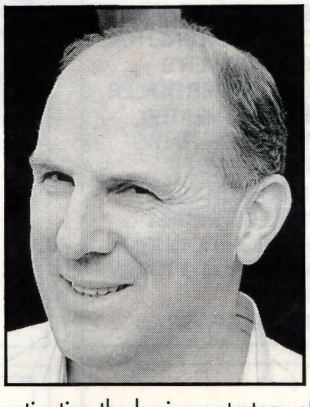
26 **Profile:** Looking at the Toptours operation in Belgium and how it makes sure the francs keep rolling in.

29 **Restoration:** The Japanese buy a 40-year-old British coach called Little Billy.

30 **Licensing & Legal:** Operators are told to keep to registered service schedules; a Lancashire company carried out international operations without the proper licence; Wirralbus gets the go-ahead to run 20 vehicles.

33 **Tourism:** Looking at what's on offer in Weymouth; plus news of more special deals for operators.

Sealink unveils its plans for the future – see page 10



Investigating the business strategy of a Belgian operator – see page 26

Weymouth is a great place to visit – see page 33

COMMENT

HOW do you increase quality and boost your profits? The Belgians have the right idea, but it isn't perfect. They grade coaches using a four star system, yet fail to exercise adequate control or educate their customers.

Surely there is some mileage in a system of quality badging. Label coaches with one, two, three or four stars and charge accordingly.

A wise operator gives customers a stark choice - an inferior coach at a low rate or a quality vehicle at a realistic rate. The trouble is that definitions mean different things to different people and there is always the fear of the so and so round the corner doing the same job for less. Standardise the terminology and selling the service becomes easier.

Kevin Mannion (*Coachmart* 607 September 27) has the right approach - profit from specialising in quality. Coliseum operates the Statesman at preferential rates (*Coachmart* 606 September 20). Asquith believes specialised vehicles earn top money (*Coachmart* 608 October 4). A star rating system should mean higher rates for all operators. Could it work in the UK?

Coachmart supports anything that will benefit all operators. However, a UK star system would have to be imposed, strictly regulated and well publicised. The future profitability of UK coach operators must surely depend on the ability of operators to increase rates.

DISPLAYING arrogance which verges on cynicism, British Rail has once again stung the commuter with fare increases way beyond inflationary levels.

Some workers going 80 miles or so to work will be paying a staggering £4,000 a year - a big chunk of anyone's salary. It may well be the kind of figure which pushes commuting on to coaches.

Coach commuting offers not only substantial reductions in cost but the guarantee of a seat and the joy of a virtual door-to-door service. The appeal of these factors alone has persuaded The King's Ferry to put on 30 coaches to carry almost 1,500 Kent commuters.

So what are the chances of other companies starting commuter services? British Rail is certainly going out of its way to make sure that opportunity is provided. What's more, the passengers disenchanted with BR are people used to shelling out a four-figure sum at the start of every year - and money up front is worth more than invoices sent to tour companies.

And London's not the only commuter city. Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bristol... these are all areas where coach operation could feasibly rob the trains of a few bums on seats.

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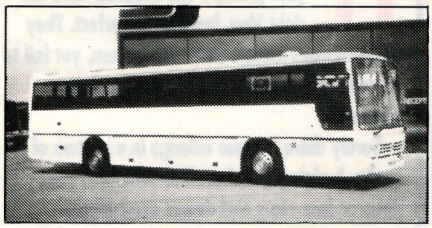


1989 F
DAF SB2300 DUPLE 320 SL ZF GEARBOX, TINTED GLASS, POWER DOOR, 57 RECLINING SEATS, RADIO/P.A./ CASSETTE, ALL WHITE EXTERIOR WITH BROWN STRIPE MOQUETTE INTERIOR, M.O.T. 31.5.91.
CHOICE OF TWO.

DEPOSIT	£20,000
18 MONTHS x	£795
42 MONTHS x	£1,395
BALLOON	£20,000

1987 D
VOLVO B10M PLAXTON 3500 4 STAR 53/49 RECLINING SEATS, PLUS COURIER, DOUBLE GLAZED SIDE WINDOW, FULL DRAW CURTAINS, DEMOUNTABLE CENTRE TOILET, AIRCRAFT TYPE RACK DOORS, WEBASTO HEATER, RADIO/PA/ CASSETTE, TV, VIDEO, WATER BOILER, ALL WHITE EXTERIOR WITH GREY CHEVRON MOQUETTE INTERIOR, M.O.T. 16.5.91

DEPOSIT	£20,000
12 MONTHS x	£999
48 MONTHS x	£1,699
BALLOON	£15,000

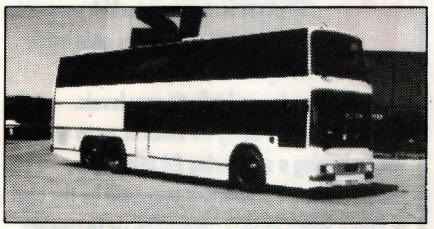
1988 E
DAF MB230 PLAXTON 3500, 49 RECLINING SEATS, PLUS COURIER SEAT, REAR SUNKEN TOILET, CONTINENTAL DOOR, DRIVER'S BUNK, WATER BOILER, WEBASTO HEATER, TELMA, ABS, RADIO/ PA/CASSETTE, FINISHED IN ALL WHITE WITH GREY CHEVRON MOQUETTE INTERIOR. M.O.T. MAY 1991.
CHOICE OF TWO.

DEPOSIT	£0,000
18 MONT	999
42 MO	£1,750
BALLOON	£19,250

SOLD

1985/86
LEYLAND TIGER 245/ 260 DUPLE, HIGH FLOOR COACHES, FULLY REFURBISHED BY S.J. LTD., FITTED 48/50 RECLINING SEATS PLUS COURIER SEAT, RETRIMMED IN GREY CHEVRON MOQUETTE, TINTED GLASS, CURTAINS, RADIO/PA/CASSETTE, FINISHED IN WHITE, M.O.T. JUNE 1991.
CHOICE OF FOUR.

DEPOSIT	£15,000
12 MONTHS x	£750
36 MONTHS x	£1,182
BALLOON	NIL



1988 E
DAF SB 3000 PLAXTON 4000 DOUBLE DECK COACH, ZF 7 SPEED GEARBOX, 74 RECLINING SEATS PLUS COURIER SEAT, TINTED GLASS, CURTAINS, DRIVERS BUNK, TOILET, WATER BOILER, ALL WHITE EXTERIOR WITH GREY CHEVRON MOQUETTE INTERIOR, M.O.T. MAY 1991.

DEPOSIT	£2 000
18 MONTH	00
42 MON	£1,979
BALLOON	£40,000

SOLD

1989 F
DAF SB2305 AND MB 230LB CHASSIS CAETANO ALGARVE BODY FITTED, 53 RECLINING SEATS PLUS COURIER SEAT, REAR CONTINENTAL DOOR, TINTED GLASS WITH FULL DRAW CURTAINS, GREY OR BROWN MOQUETTE INTERIOR.
CHOICE OF FOUR.

DEPOSIT	£20,000
12 MONTHS x	£1,100
48 MONTHS x	£1,599
BALLOON	£15,000

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■FIXTURES

Record-breaking bid at coach day

THE COACH Tourism Council's Coaching for Pleasure day in Nottingham hopes to enter the Guinness Book of Records when it is held next Tuesday, October 16.

The day trip around the city will be the biggest coach trip ever organised, sporting 25 vehicles and more than 1,000 people - a spectacle which has already attracted national media attention to the coach tourism trade.

Coach operators attending will be demonstrating their vehicles and services to the Press, tourist offices and other spectators at the huge event. The day starts at 11 am at Wollaton Hall, Nottingham.

■LONDON TRAFFIC

Beware of hold-ups

LONDON marches and marathons look like disrupting traffic this month, says the Metropolitan Police Coach Advisory Service.

- On October 14, the Ladies Marathon at Southwark Park, at 9 am goes along Lower Road, Jamaica Road, Druid Street, Tooley Street, Brunel Road, Salter Road and Redriff Road. To add to traffic problems, Tower Bridge is closed for repairs from 7 am on Saturday October 13 to 6 pm on Sunday October 14.
- On October 20, there is a poll tax demonstration from Kennington Park to Brackwell. Operators carrying demonstrators must contact the Police, on 071 230 5332, for details of set-down and pick-up points. This is essential.

■COACH TOURS

The King's Ferry pulls out of its Spanish service

THE King's Ferry has pulled out of the London-Barcelona service it has run for five years in a row over payment.

The King's Ferry's managing director Peter O'Neill says rocketing fuel prices played a part in increasing costs to a level where the profit was too low to be viable. A six-month contract for the work was picked up by Sevenoaks-based West Kingsdown.

'It's not our company policy to lose money,' said Mr O'Neill. 'I had asked for a rate increase but Eurolines would not meet them.'

Eurolines is maintaining that the reason Mr O'Neill quit the contract was because the vehicles had to be in Eurolines livery, providing The King's Ferry with the problems of dedicated mini-fleets.

'Hardly likely,' said Mr O'Neill. 'I bought three new air conditioned Bovas in April for the contract and liveried them at a cost of almost £400,000. We had an argument about the size the King's Ferry name appeared on the side, but I reduced the size to Eurolines' satisfaction.'

The King's Ferry has now sold off two of the dedicated coaches used and will integrate two others into the fleet.

* West Kingsdown will operate the route for its initial six-month contract period with two Volvo Jonckheere coaches. Air conditioned vehicles will follow if West Kingsdown decides to take up the three-year contract option.

Barcelona service: stopped after row over cash.

■NEW SALES

New vehicle sales still down

THE coach and bus market continued its decline during September, with a quarter fewer vehicles registered during the month but a slower decline recorded for the year to date.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders reports that Volvo held on to its 30 or so sales of last month, but last year sold 54 vehicles in the same month. It was not such a good story for Leyland Bus, whose near-100 sales last month dropped to 37 , against 103 sold in September '89.

The drop in interest rates may have a minor effect on this and mext month's sales but the forecast for new orders remains gloomy as coach business enters the winter with direct costs pushed higher by fuel price increases and increased new vehicle prices.

	September		Year to date	
	1990	1989	1990	1989
Dennis UK	39	5	281	210
Duple UK	0	2	18	22
Leyland Bus UK	37	103	725	813
DAF UK	7	18	182	232
MAN VW (De)	0	0	3	0
MCW/Optare	1	1	35	228
Scania (Sw)	32	8	177	129
Volvo (Sw)	32	54	614	656
Other British	0	6	16	33
Other imports	17	21	204	179
Total British	77	117	1075	1306
Total imports	88	101	1185	1202
Total	165	218	2260	2508

■SECONDHAND SALES

Secondhand sales' picture is better

USED coach sales during September showed a little more optimism than of late but were still well below previous years' sales.

Once again it is the low to medium-priced range vehicles that are selling with many of the later model higher specification coaches remaining unaffordable.

Best buys would appear to be Leyland Leopards and older Volvos with British bodywork, but prices on Bedford Fords and AECs are continuing to fall rapidly, and unless a cheap contract vehicle is required, are not an investment proposition.

Many operators with older vehicles in good condition and in daily use are finding these vehicles have become undesirable as part exchange propositions. It may well be to their advantage to consider selling the vehicle themselves or even scrapping the vehicle, to protect the resale value of other vehicles in their fleet.

Sales together with other special promotions from other dealers can only be to the benefit of the operator. For to buy now at these very special prices the operator will be able to enhance the value of his fleet at the dealer's expense.

The recent news of our joining the ERM and the reduction of interest rates by one percent should give everyone encouragement to plan ahead for 1991 and hopefully this will result in an upturn in used coach sales.

■MMC INVESTIGATION

MMC backs down over Western Travel deal

THE MONOPOLIES and Mergers Commission has dropped its investigation of Western Travel's acquisition of G & G Coaches in May, having said the deal does not operate against public interest.

The merger gave Western Travel 34 percent of the local bus mileage, but topped up its percentage in Warwick and Leamington by 20 percent to 85 percent.

The MMC said that the impending privatisation of West Midlands Travel (*Coachmart* 608, October 4) would provide the company with competition should it abuse its dominance.

The move was a relief to some operators who feared a repeat of Nicholas Ridley's enforced demerging action, which is being opposed by SYT.

■COACH

'Coach will beat air'

NEW Coach Europe managing director Paul Cresswell says coach services will triumph over air in the 1990s.

Speaking after the International Leisure Group subsidiary was re-structured, he said: 'Difficulties in the travel industry caused by rising fuel prices will benefit coach line and shuttle services to the near Mediterranean over air charters.'

Mr Cresswell replaces Jackie Kernaghan, who now heads up ILG's Lancaster, Global and Drive Europe subsidiaries.

Coach Europe is now part of ILG's Special Brands Division which is headed by Club 18-30 subsidiary managing director Jeremy Muller. NAT Holidays and Intasun are in the Camping Coach Europe division. David Fenton, who was Coach Europe's operations director, has left the company.

'There will be no more redundancies,' said Mr Cresswell. 'Seasonal staff will disappear through natural wastage.'

● Coach Europe's coach feeder interchange will move to Farthing Corner services ready for next March. Mr Cresswell says the international line service and shuttle operation will be upgrading its interchange in the move from Dover Docks.

■LIQUIDATION

Antler's £2 million deficit

INSOLVENT Antler holidays owed £2 million, 350 creditors were told at its liquidation meeting in Lichfield.

The deficit figure includes £1.1 million for lease termination claims for its ex-fleet of 18 high specification coaches, but this may be reduced as creditors such as Credit Lyonais have repossessed the vehicles and are currently re-arranging finance for the assets.

However, with nearly a £1 million debit to other creditors in real terms, it is double the amount first thought.

Liquidator Henry Hayes told *Coachmart*:

'There are upwards of 2,500 creditors and we will now realise what few assets are available for the benefit of secured creditors, in other words the banks, and preferential creditors, who in this case are the Government - with outstanding claims for PAYE income tax and National Insurance contributions.'

■NEW COMPANY

Coachcraft: former managing director says company crash caused by secondhand policy.

Mullen is back in minibus business

THE former managing director of liquidated Coachcraft of Doncaster has started another minibus building business.

Mick Mullen has kicked off with four former Coachcraft employees housed in the original company's first premises at Armthorpe. The first vehicles to be finished - a Renault Master to executive specification and a Ford Transit, both 14-seaters - will be shown at Expocoach later this month.

'I'm back to where Coachcraft was ten years ago,' said Mr Mullen. He said the liquidation of Coachcraft was not completed, but he expected creditors to get 50p in the pound.

'After the voluntary liquidation in July, I tried to get another job. But no-one wants to know if you've been self-employed,' said Mr Mullen.

He blames the crash of Coachcraft on the policy of taking in secondhand vehicles for part exchange: 'In three years, we lost a lot of money,' he said. 'From Christmas last year, we were carrying £70,000 in secondhand stock.

'Nobody wants secondhand minibuses, and I couldn't even shift them by dropping the price to the extent where I covered costs. To save the business, I was negotiating the sale of the Coachcraft building but the bankers wouldn't wait the fortnight it took. Within two weeks, I had got £240,000 and could have paid everyone off.'

Mr Mullen says the new firm, Central Coachbuilders, of Doncaster, would not repeat the mistake of taking in secondhand stock. Money to launch the firm has been provided by re-mortgaging his house.

■TAKEOVER

Ultimate Connection sold

ROBIN Littlewood's Ultimate Connection company set up less than a year ago has been sold to Northern Bus at Anston, near Sheffield.

Northern Travel's coach fleet of nine executives and five others, used chiefly for corporate business, will be complemented by the acquisition, it says.

Mr Littlewood becomes a director of Northern Bus Company Leisure - the parent holding group - and will manage the marketing arm of the business.

The acquisition of Ultimate Connection - which formerly traded extensively with Tom Jowitt Travel - sees several lucrative contracts move to NBC, and will handle the carriage of four Barclays League football teams, Sheffield United, Sheffield Wednesday, Rotherham United and Chesterfield Town.

Offices of Ultimate Connection are closed and the business will be run from NBC's Anston site: 'The work doesn't exist for all the operators in this market,' said NBC director Duncan Roberts.

'The merging of these companies will strengthen Northern Travel's business and make it more competitive.'

Included in the Northern Travel fleet is the £18,500 Metroliner bought at auction earlier this year, now extensively refurbished to 50-seat executive specification. This vehicle will be tested in a future edition of *Coachmart*.

■COACH TOURS

EC pushes compulsory bonding

COACH tour operators with both continental and UK programmes will have to be bonded after 1992, when EC directives have been adopted.

The new legislation will require any operator putting together a package which includes both transport and accommodation to insure its clients against company failure for the full cost of their holiday and for return to Britain.

Laws are also proposed which prevent price rises in tours after a period 20 days before departure date, and insist that surcharges can only be applied if passengers are told exactly how they will be calculated.

The proposals have been met with mixed feelings by operators - some of whom say bonding will give coach tours a better name, and others who say they simply can't afford the bonding fees.

'I've always believed bonding should be compulsory,' said Colin Hearn managing director of Hampshire-based Angela Holidays.

Siesta: bonding will produce 'flat pitch' on which to compete.

'We are bonded because we have to be if we are selling through travel agents, but we have no objection to legislation which might stop a lot of 'cowboy' tour operations which give the industry a bad name.'

Siesta, of Hull, isn't bonded for coach tours... but believes compulsory bonding will produce a 'flat pitch' on which it will be able to compete.

'At the moment, bonding is an extra cost, but our holidays are sold chiefly on price. The higher price might make them less competitive,' said Siesta's financial controller John Harrison. 'But I actually agree with the punter being covered by bonding. In this industry, bonding would sort out the wheat from the chaff.

'Siesta would welcome more stringent controls over smaller, rogue operators. Some agencies wouldn't bond small companies at all because they haven't got the reserves and assets. And bonding in any case can cost 2.5 percent of turnover.'

Excelsior said any operator not able to pay for bonding probably shouldn't be in the tour business: 'Of course, I view with sadness the problems some small coach companies might face, but all companies should be adequately funded,' said managing director Len Clarke.

'This is a people industry, and as such its people must be protected. When a company collapses leaving hundreds of people stranded, it causes no end of damage.

'I would be happy if compulsory bonding were introduced tomorrow. It really isn't that expensive, and a properly-structured company should be able to get the cost down to around one percent of turnover,' he said. 'We simply cannot afford any more bad press.'

Paul Cresswell, managing director of Coach Europe, said he felt bonding would become a necessity next season: 'There will be a backlash from consumers. In the past, customers have accepted that a well-known local company is a safe bet. Now, the question of bonding is among the first they raise.'

■DIESELWATCH

Pump prices up

DIESEL prices at roadside service stations have risen while bulk prices have fallen, according to BP's information office.

Over the past week coach operators have had to pay an extra 2.3 pence for each gallon of diesel fuel at the retail pump. But the international bulk price, which is set by the Rotterdam spot market, has fallen slightly - down from £181.37 to £175.83 for each tonne of diesel purchased. *

Such price movements not only confirm money could have been saved by fuel bunkering over the past week, but show price movements have had more to do with traders' expectations than simple laws of supply and demand.

Despite the Gulf crisis, there is little shortage of supply on the world markets. Supply from Iraq and Kuwait has been very nearly made up by increased production from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela - with a total drop of global production of only 2.5 percent since before the crisis.

*Prices at midnight, October 5.

■COACH SALES

Plaxton sale has been extended

PLAXTON has extended its summer sale for a further two weeks because of the 'resounding success' of the first fortnight.

Altogether, it has sold 59 vehicles, but most buyers have been concentrated in the north of England. Ware, Barrhead and Stantonwick outlets have been relatively quiet, said Plaxton.

'We're very pleased indeed with the response to our first-ever sale,' said sales director John Littlewood. 'If it keeps up during the next two weeks then I'm sure we'll be making the sale an annual event.'

Plaxton said operators to benefit had included Delaine of Bourne, which had bought an ex-London Country Leyland Tiger Dominant IV Express for local services to add to its fleet of 13 Tigers.

● Plaxton answers its critics - see Letters, page 17

■PEOPLE

Hodgkins for Kentish

KENTISH Bus and Coach has appointed former G & G Travel managing director John Hodgkins as its coaching manager. Mr Hodgkins takes on the 18-vehicle fleet some of which provide the service 720 Kent commuter route.

■ THE Belfast-based side of the Walter Alexander bus-building business has appointed a new materials manager and new purchasing officer. Alan Reilly takes the former post, while Michael Smyth takes the purchasing officer's post.

■ RIBBLE has announced its final changes in management - the appointment of John Gould as operations director and Ben Colson (above) as commercial director.

The Stagecoach-owned bus company got Mr Gould from Drawlane's Bee Line Buzz Company, in Manchester, where he was commercial director. Mr Colson is transferred to Ribble from Stagecoach-owned United Counties where he was also commercial manager.

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■LONDON TRANSPORT

Londoners urged to report drivers

LONDONERS are being asked to 'shop' coach drivers who park illegally or use unsuitable streets.

Post-paid cards are being issued to 100,000 residents so they can report any coach which breaks the Bus and Coach Council's street-parking code of conduct... and the City of Westminster council threatens action against the worst offenders.

The council is pressing the Government to allow traffic wardens the power to clamp coaches, and may well use the results of residents' complaints to back its case for further action against coach operators using London.

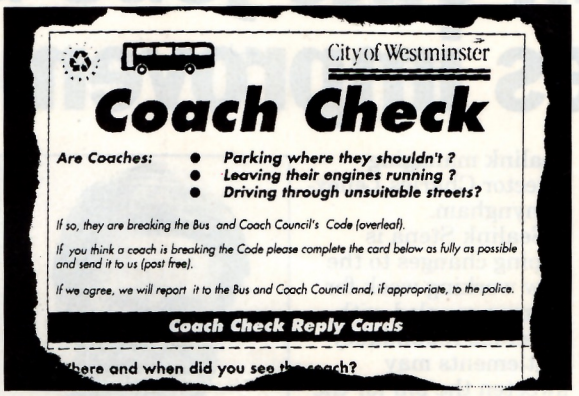
The scheme's organiser David Weeks, deputy leader of the council, also wants coach parking fines pushed from £20 to £100, and has suggested that the coach industry itself should be levied to pay for 110 extra London traffic wardens.

Among 'offences' residents are being asked to report are illegal parking, overnight parking, coaches with their engines running for extended periods, or simply driving through 'unsuitable streets.'

The campaign has already met with stiff opposition from the London Tourist Coach Operators' Association, which says it appears the residents of Westminster are being given the chance to be judge and jury.

'They don't seem to be giving us a chance to defend ourselves,' said LTCOA chairman Keith Myers. 'To put it mildly, we are not very happy about this scheme.'

Mr Myers went on to criticise the views of Verite Baker, whose feature based on a London resident's opinions of coaching sparked angry reaction from many operators.


City of Westminster
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Are Coaches:
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If so, they are breaking the Bus and Coach Council's Code (overleaf).
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Coach Check Reply Cards

'Her feature was not well received,' said Mr Myers. 'We might have expected comments such as hers from someone unconnected with coach tourism, but not from someone who has worked with coaches.

'Westminster residents choose to live there. Coaching is a part of the tourism scene in Westminster.'

Westminster Council says coach companies will be allowed to answer critics through the Bus and Coach Council, which will be sent details of offenders: 'We cannot exact direct penalties,' said a Westminster spokesman. 'There are no circumstances in which we would report drivers to the Police, and even if we did, the Police would apply their standards to any prosecution.'

The spokesman said the scheme would at least help the council assess the problems caused to residents by coach traffic, and guide it to further areas in which coach traffic bans could be introduced. Already, two areas are considering such bans.

He accused operators of under-use of the bays and parking meters Westminster has available: 'There are 66 bays in the borough. If we were to change these to parking spaces for cars, we could get another £4,500 a year, yet the bays we have are not fully utilised.'

The BCC is to help police the scheme: 'But we do not believe our members have anything to worry about, since they are not among the offending operators,' said a spokesman.

● See Letters page 19

■LONDON TRANSPORT

Fares soar in London

LONDON Transport has announced near-10 percent fare increases on buses, the underground and Docklands Light Railway starting in January next year.

The addition of another zone in the underground system pushes some tube fares still higher, while LT's Travelcard goes up more than 10 percent - some tickets costing 14 percent extra.

Fare structures change on some bus routes, adding to the peak fare premium, but cutting some off-peak fares slightly.

The move comes alongside British Rail's announcement of fare rises of 15 percent next year, which will effectively drive commuters off the trains and some out of London.

One of London's biggest commuter coach operations run from Medway towns by The King's Ferry is bound to benefit, says the firm's managing director Peter O'Neill.

Peter O'Neill: commuter coach market is getting stronger.

'Funnily enough, I'd decided on a 10 percent fare increase myself from October 29 due to rising fuel prices, then later heard about the BR fare increase,' he told *Coachmart*.

'This is really good news. Money is tight, and this will get commuters to think again about using the trains and London Transport to get to work.'

The King's Ferry now charges £1,175 for a commuter season ticket against a £1,600 rail fare: 'But the difference is that we offer a seat, and BR can't,' Mr O'Neill.

'I think the commuter coaching market is getting stronger.. and thankfully so does my bank manager!'

Mr O'Neill says he'd operate articulated coaches if motorway law didn't prevent them using the overtaking lane: 'We could definitely take more commuters, and it would solve the problem of double-decks, which commuters mistakenly believe are slower.'

The King's Ferry carries an average of 1,350 commuters every morning on 30 coaches, concentrated solely on the Southern corridor.

■FERRY

Channel traffic hits new height

CROSS-channel traffic has reached a new peak at Dover, which has taken 87,765 coaches aboard since January 1.

The eight-month figures for passengers rose to a record high of 11 million - a rise of 360,000 since the same period last year - and freight transport increased to 8.9 million tonnes, up five percent.

A total of 1 million cars and motorcycles went through the terminal.

● Department of Transport statistics show that 5.1 million cars travelled by ferry during 1989.

■BUS SERVICES

Midibuses go on the road

REEVE Burgess Harrier midibuses will be used by London United between Hounslow and Yeading - on a new Sunday service starting in December.

They were chosen for their features, which help disabled and elderly passengers.

Frequencies on Route 232 will be increased from 25 minutes to 20 minute headways in the mornings and 15 minutes during the afternoons. It will continue to run half-hourly in the early mornings and evenings.

■TOURS

Groupways' new offices

GROUPWAYS Leisure has moved out of London and into plush new offices at Chesham, Buckinghamshire. *The new address is 116a High Street, Chesham, Bucks HP5 1EB. Tel:0494 792722, Fax: 0494 792723.*

■FERRIES

Sealink cuts jobs but pledges improvements

SEALINK last week assured coach operators that cross-channel journies will improve as a result of its newly-announced £178 million investment plan.

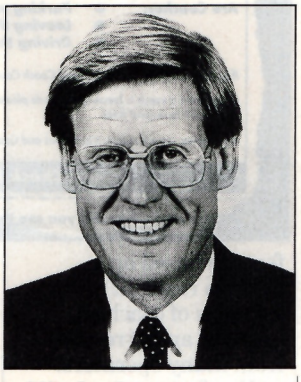
But the new Sealink Stena Line company - merged with Swedish shipping giant Stena last May - also announced a staggering 850 redundancies, which may well bring port chaos if talks with the NUS and other seamen's unions break down.

Already, Sealink has cut shore-based staff by 30 percent, replacing many with new computerised systems for routine clerical work. The headquarters has been shifted from London to Ashford: 'This is part of a continual programme of slimming down,' said Sealink managing director Charles Lenox-Conyngham.

Sealink Stena is hoping changes to the new working week for seamen coupled with generous redundancy settlements may sweeten the pill for the unions, and the company has promised 800 new jobs when changes to ferry services are introduced next summer.

The new-look Sealink is putting its investment behind more and better ferries, with passenger travel geared around on-board entertainment and sales as on Scandinavian ships.

'The average Scandinavian passenger spends around £35 per trip aboard a ferry. A UK passenger spends £10,' said a spokesman.



Charles Lenox-Conyngham: changes are part of a slimming programme.

To push this figure higher, Sealink will be providing dancing and entertainment, and gearing sailing times outside of anti-social hours to ensure passengers use them.

The promised Southampton-Cherbourg service is to go ahead using the Saint class vessel St Nicholas. Like other ships in the fleet, it will be re-christened after a £1.5 million refit using the 'Stena' name. Southampton port will spend £1 million on port facilities. The opening of the Channel Tunnel will close Folkestone as a passenger port, said Sealink.

'The purpose of these changes is to iron out the peak from June to August and increase business in the flat areas,' said a Sealink spokesman.

'We've got to get a lot of people aboard our vessels and that certainly involves coach passengers.'

More long-term plans may involve Sealink in hotels, said managing director Charles Lenox-Conyngham.

Changes planned at top ports

SEALINK Stena Line services at almost all of the company's operating ports will change during summer.

● **Stranraer-Larne:** Three multi-purpose ferries will be in use. £3 million will be spent on refits and £5 million on onshore facilities, with optional plans to build a new passenger terminal. Total cost £8 million

● **Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire:** More sailings - up to four a day - by two improved ships. Total cost £8 million.

● **Fishguard-Rosslare:** A further £0.5 million to be spent on Felicity, the only Sealink ferry based at Folkestone. More sailings based on better turnaround and terminal improvements. Total cost £4.5 million.

● **Harwich-Hook of Holland:** New ships and improved port facilities. £4 million to be spent on Parkeston Quay, and £5 million on passenger terminal facilities. Total cost £81 million.

● **Dover-Calais/ Folkestone-Boulogne:** New ferry costing £40 million to come into service. Total cost £75 million.

● **Southampton-Cherbourg:** New service costing £1.5 million, plus £1 million to be spent by Southampton port authorities on shore.

Duty free charges would cause fares leap

FARES could rise by 30 percent in 1992 if EC proposals to end duty free shops go through, warned Sealink Stena Line.

A significant amount of the company's profit comes from the sale of duty free items, some of which carry a 200 percent mark-up, and the new plans to base further profit on on-board sales make this an important part of ferry business.

Super ferry goes back to sea

THE 9,000 ton super ferry Champs Elysees has been put on the Newhaven-Dieppe route after a £4 million refit. The 1,800-passenger RORO joins the Versailles to give up to four sailings a day from Newhaven. It replaces the Chartres, which has been moved to Dover-Calais.

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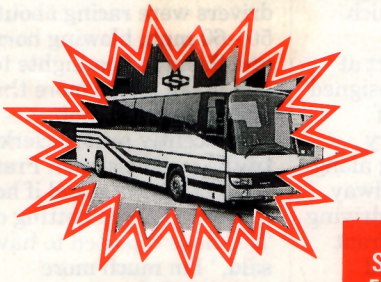
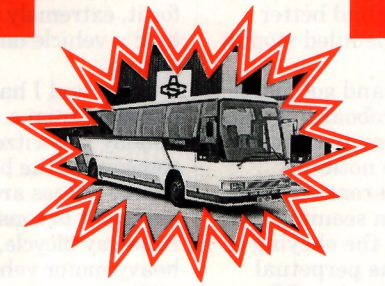


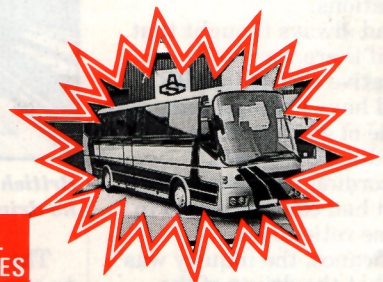
1982 LEYLAND DOM II 53 seater

1986 IVECO VIANA 19 seats

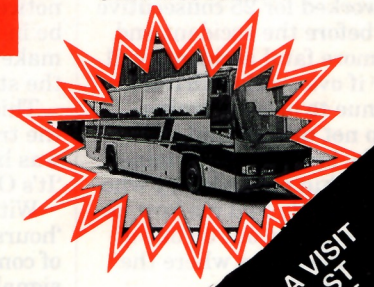
1988 DAF MB230 ALGARVE



1986 BOVA FUTURA FHD



1986 DAF MB200 SMiT ORION 53 seater



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Children's waiting rooms could stimulate business

I HAVE never really understood why the coach industry gives generous concessionary children's rates on express services and excursions.

An occasional special offer of 10 percent, or exceptionally 25 percent, for promotional purposes would appear to suffice.

Shops do not sell their products at half price to youngsters. So I have never really grasped why we wildly discount the basic value of our commodity, a seat.

For many years I have been pressing for a concession of two thirds rather than half - and if we were ever generally charging two thirds I would then push for three quarters of adult fare.

This has cogency in the debate about the carriage of unaccompanied children on express services.

For a start, I think that the risks are overstated.

A child is at no greater (and probably, less) risk on a coach than on the street.

Look around any city, town or village (even at night) at the unaccompanied children loitering on pavements.

Each week, ten children are killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents. Motorists do not get 'a bad press' for this carnage.

Is the coach in general, and National Express in particular, at serious risk of the wrath of the media in the statistically unlikely event of an unaccompained child passenger being lost, injured or molested? I rather doubt it.

I, and my children, have travelled on express services as very young, unaccompanied, children. I have relatives whose youngsters regularly travel in this way. I have also encountered 'child commuters' going by train to parental choice schools making twice daily journeys of 40 - 50 miles. It seems to be a too valuable part of business to discard.

Is not the solution then to abolish the child fare and use the revenue gained to provide special supervised children's waiting rooms at main express termini and similar facilities at principal refreshment halts?

My gut feeling is that this would not only preserve the present level of child traffic, it might increase it.

But would not a caring service also be valued, and thus stimulate coach travel, much more than a cheap fare?

BR is heading for disaster

FOR years, our industry has bridled at the fact that the railways have unfair competitive benefit in the use of duty free fuel.

The inquiry into the crash in Stafford station on August 4 revealed another: that BR appears to have no effective equivalent of drivers' hours regulations.

I had always thought that, even if there was no legislative restriction, BR would have followed some sort of code of good practice regarding driver rest.

According to a press report, which had column inches in inverse ratio to its significance, the inquiry was told that the driver of the train which caused the crash had worked for 25 consecutive days before the accident and that more fatal accidents will occur if overworked drivers continue to operate trains.

I do not understand rail signals, but a friend of mine from within our industry who does, recently told me how he took his family out on one of these little trains where the driver is just in a compartment in the front.

The train driver too had his wife and family with him on the front seat of the train.

Both my friend and the train driver's wife were concerned when the train passed a 'stop' signal without even slowing down.

British Rail: appears to have no drivers' hours regulations.

The driver's wife was heard to comment on this to her husband, who said he had not noticed it adding, '...but I will be in trouble, I had better make an unscheduled stop in the station.'

This he did, and got out of the train. On reboarding, he was heard to say to his wife, 'It's OK no one noticed!'

With no apparent effective 'hours' limits, a seeming lack of control over the obeying of signals, and the perpetual overloading of trains, BR seems to be running on a track heading for disasters.

Frightening enough in itself, but also monstrously unfair when, in our competing for passengers, we alone are obliged to comply with safety legislation.

Beware of Swiss roads

EVER since a lorry driver was killed when his vehicle plunged through barriers on the Tinsley viaduct - which were described by the Department of Transport at the time as not being designed to withstand that sort of impact - I have been very cautious about speeding along sections of elevated roadway.

In several decades of driving I have twice suffered a front tyre blow out. On the odd occasions when a front tyre just goes bang and instantly deflates, it is, take my word for it, extremely difficult to hold a vehicle on a straight course.

Betsy and I have recently returned from a motoring holiday in Switzerland and some cases the barriers on Alpine passes are barely sufficient to constrain a runaway bicycle, far less a heavy motor vehicle.

Their carriageway width is narrower than ours and consequently one is frequently driving with a front wheel no more than a metre from a very nasty death.

At times I found the visibility of the sheer downward drop about three times greater than that of the near horizontal road ahead.

Yet the local kamikaze drivers were racing about at 50 - 60 mph, blowing horns and flashing headlights to try and make me do more than my cautious 25 mph.

A recently retired clerk to a traffic commissioner, Frank Hill OBE, was asked if he was concerned about getting old. 'No,' he is reported to have said, ' I'm much more concerned about not getting old.'

I too plan to live long enough to enjoy my old age and will not be bullied into death by mad Swiss drivers.

Operators and drivers who have never ventured to Switzerland might do well to, not only conjecture on my caution (fear, if you like), but also to remember that whereas our tiny inclines, like Countisbury Hill going into Lynmouth, have gravel arrestor escape lanes, they are unlikely to be found on the 10 - 20 mile descents to be found in Switzerland.

Brakes, together with near essential retarders, as well as tyres, need to be in first class order!

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Westways wins a Showbus accolade

WESTWAYS Mini-Buses, of High Wycombe, was runner-up in the coach section of Showbus '90 (*Coachmart* 608, October 4).

This creditable achievement came during the first year in business for Michael and Jocelyne West. After resigning from a coach driving job, Mrs West started the business alone on January 1.

With two small coaches - 16 seat Freight Rover and 12 seat Transit - she covered school contracts and developed the private hire side. A month later husband Michael took the plunge and joined the business full-time.

Fleet expansion came on August 1 when a third coach was acquired from a local operator. This two-year-old Mercedes Benz 609 has Reeve Burgess 23 seat bodywork. Mr West reports 24 mpg from the owner-driven vehicle.

Although cautious about the future, Mrs West suggested that the risk of going alone had paid off. She told *Coachmart:* 'We're paying the bills and surviving.'

Motor Show stars

A LONDON Buses S75 midi with 31 seat Reeve Burgess body and Telma CC50 retarder (now standard equipment) represented Renault's PSV range at this year's NEC Motor Show.

The Allison AT542 four-speed automatic transmission fitted to the S75 is to be an option across the 50 series range. Other changes announced at the show relate to the S56 welfare bus chassis, which will have improved performance and service life.

PSVs were notably thin on the ground at the Show. This Wright bodied Mercedes Benz 811D reflected the large number of similar vehicles to enter service in the capital.

The Wright TS303 body uses Alusuisse anti-corrodal aluminium framing, which is claimed to offer longer life. Wright's lower panel repair system is designed to allow total replacement in approximately four hours.

Duples head for Tenby

TENBY Bus and Coach Company Ltd of Tenby, South Wales, has taken delivery of two new Duple 340SLs on DAF SB2305 DHS chassis from Huges DAF Ltd.

Each vehicle has 53 recliners, centre demountable toilet and continental door, TV/video, full draw curtains and radio/PA system.

Vehicles are finished in white with red, yellow and black stripes.

've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...You've

DAFs get on board AutoSky

AUTOSKY, the commercial wing of Gatwick Airport Limited's motor transport department, has recently purchased two DAF coaches.

The vehicles are DAF SB2305DHS with Duple 340SL bodywork and are fitted with 53 reclining seats, toilet, drinks dispenser, radio/cassette/PA and ferry lift.

Steve Plent, manager of AutoSky, told *Coachmart:* 'After running one on trial for a couple of months we decided to go for two.'

AutoSky is the only BAA subsidiary operation with an international operator's licence. Currently on trial is a Van Hool bodied SB3000, which has created a favourable impression.

The main type of work for the fleet of seven coaches involves inter-airport transfers in the UK and near continent. Due to weather and other delays, passengers are occasionally put up in hotels with the associated need for coach transfer.

AutoSky is also involved in London tours placed by agencies and mini-break weekends linked with BAA's expanding hotel chain.

Said Mr Plent: 'With one Jumbo needing half a dozen coaches, we frequently work alongside other companies and occasional National Express work is done in the interests of our customers.'

Pictured are: Steve Plent, manager of AutoSky (left) and Robert McCleod, managing director of Hughes DAF (right).

South Lancs chooses Willowbrook

DAVE Stewart of South Lancs Transport has taken a Willowbrook Warrior service bus on Leyland Leopard chassis.

South Lancs started operation in St Helens 12 months ago with 10 buses – most routes are commercial and in competition with Merseybus. After recent authorisation to increase its fleet there are now 14 operational Leopards and Bristol LHs – the unique Fowler bodied Leland Tiger Cub is owned but not licenced. Included in this collection of secondhand vehicles is another unique bus – a refurbished 1973 Leopard rebodied with Northern Counties bus body completed by Cleveland Transit. Traffic manager Martin Bott told *Coachmart:* 'This bus impressed us on the concept of rebodying. Mechanically it is very good and it is structurally sound.'

The Warrior bodied bus also started life with Cleveland Transit and is one of two acquired by South Lancs with bus seated Duple Dominant coach bodies. Mr Bott said: 'We expect another 10 years from it. Subject to satisfactory experience the other will get rebodied to match.' He added: 'Although not ideal for stage carriage the Leopard is cheap to run. Parts are easy to get and the chassis should outlast modern vehicles.'

With colour co-ordinated interior the new vehicle is the first non-standard Warrior and the second to the improved mark 11 specification pioneered by the vehicle supplied to Metrowest (*Coachmart* 606 September 20).

Slightly tongue in cheek Mr Bott added; 'We are looking for somebody to rebody an LH. They return 14 mpg and we have no problem in getting parts.'

Mercedes duo flies into Gatwick

TWO Mercedes Benz 811 coaches with Crystals Conversions bodywork have been delivered to Gatwick Flyer Ltd, of Romford.

Established four years ago by Carol and George Tovey, the company operates a regular service between the southern part of Essex and Gatwick airport. A basic two-hourly frequency is operated with 11 summer departures reduced to nine between November and April.

A journey time of two and a half hours is usually maintained with the help of radio control. Each driver reports traffic problems so that other vehicles can vary the route to keep time.

Roy Seboa joined the company two years ago and now has a 50 percent shareholding. He told *Coachmart:* 'We have been up to an hour late, but with a PVR of four coaches we have a spare which goes out to cover any service gaps.'

In addition to the two new 23 seaters, Gatwick Flyer runs two Citroen/Crystal 15 seaters and one Mazda/M2M 14 seater. All vehicles were acquired new and appropriate red signwriting added after delivery..

The company picked up the airport service idea from another operator which tried and failed. Marketed through over 300 travel agents, the service is now established. Mr Seboa said: 'There is potential for growth in areas not yet served.'

A few of the items on show

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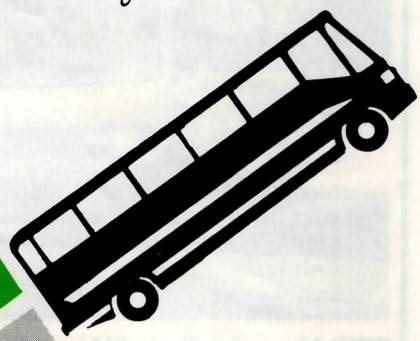


For further information: ***Expo Coach '90 ☎ 076 881 838 Fax: 076 881 809***

casa PROMOTIONS LTD

Operators can help avert accidents

From Mike Ward

SIR

I have been in correspondence with the Railway Inspectorate, Department of Transport, following an incident when an open-top double decker bus was observed passing over a level crossing in the Cambridge area underneath overhead electric wires.

While there should be no danger to persons on the upper deck in the normal course, I am concerned there is a risk if someone, especially a child, was ignorant of the dangers (or foolhardy) and raised a fishing rod or similar object, such as a balloon on a stick, and it came into contact with the overhead wires.

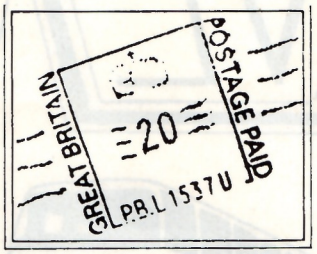
Such a person would likely receive a severe electric shock, which could prove fatal.

The matter was suitably followed up with the bus operator in Cambridge at the time, but I am concerned that the attention of bus operators throughout the country should also be alerted to the possible dangers.

Could I suggest, please, that PSV operators are asked to display a suitable warning in open top buses (in various languages) and to make arrangements for couriers to give warnings during their commentaries, where appropriate.

If someone was fatally injured in these circumstances, I assume searching questions would be asked by the Police and the Coroner (Procurator Fiscal in the case of Scotland.

MIKE WARD
SENIOR SAFETY OFFICER
BRITISH RAIL DIRECTOR OF OPERATORS



Send your letters to:
The Editor, Coachmart,
EMAP Response Publishing Ltd,
Wentworth House
Wentworth Street,
Peterborough PE1 1DS
Or by fax: 0733 62656

The Editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in Coachmart and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

We keep most people happy

From John Littlewood

SIR

In reply to the letter which appeared in *Coachmart* on October 5, in these difficult times it goes to show that in our industry we cannot please all of the people all of the time.

However, we do manage to please the majority of the operators most of the time.

JOHN LITTLEWOOD
SALES DIRECTOR
PLAXTON
ANSTON
SHEFFIELD

EYMS management changes

From Godfrey Burley

SIR

Peter Shipp and myself were pleased that you were able to find space in your September 27 issue to feature our six new Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties double deck vehicles.

Perhaps I could take this opportunity to point out the changes of title among the directors and other senior managers which have taken place since the resignation of Alan Stephenson in July last year.

The only directors are now Peter Shipp and myself: Peter is managing director - operations of EYMS Group Ltd and I am managing director - finance.

Ian Conyers is general manager of our principal subsidiary East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd, Eric Boyes is general manager of Scarborough and District Motor Services Ltd and Primrose Valley Coaches Ltd and Norman Duggleby is general manager of Cherry Coaches Ltd.

In addition to his role as managing director - operations, Peter Shipp is also managing director of East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd.

GODFREY BURLEY
EYMS GROUP
252 ANLABY ROAD
HULL

NOSTALGIA CORNER

A DISPLAY of vehicles by the Museum of British Road Transport went some way towards compensating for the shortage of new buses and coaches at this year's Motor Show.

Together with other historic commercial vehicles, this 1948 Maudsley Marathon Mk II was displayed alongside the museum's 1963 Daimler CVG6 and 1956 Karrier. The Maudsley, like the other two, was made in Coventry.

It has 50 hp 10.5 litre six cylinder petrol engine. A five speed crash gearbox gives a 55 mph cruising speed, but the fuel consumption of 6 mph would be of great concern to today's operators living under the shadow of the Gulf crisis.

Hacketts, of Manchester, was the first operator of the coach, which received a 33 seat Burlingham body.

When purchased by the museum in 1974 for £200, it was in a deplorable state with engine and gearbox full of water - a hammer and chisel being required to free the pistons.

Engine, gearbox and rear axle were rebuilt courtesy of local engineering firms: Coventry Boring and Metaling, Pistons Coventry and RHP Bearings. The body was restored by the museum and painted in the red and brown house colours of what was then Coventry's Industrial Museum.

The full display is open for viewing at Hales Street, Coventry, seven days a week from 10am to 5pm.

24 HOUR

AVENGER

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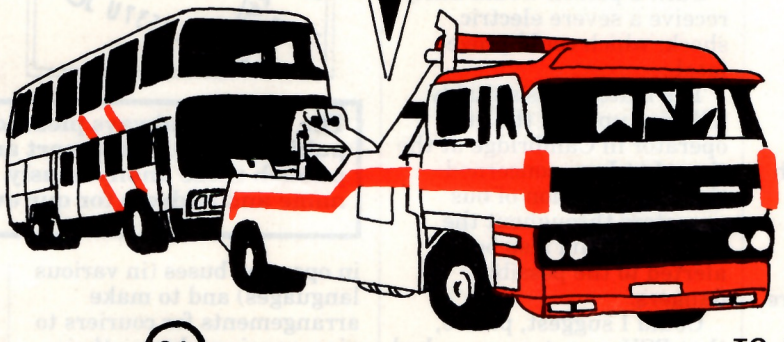

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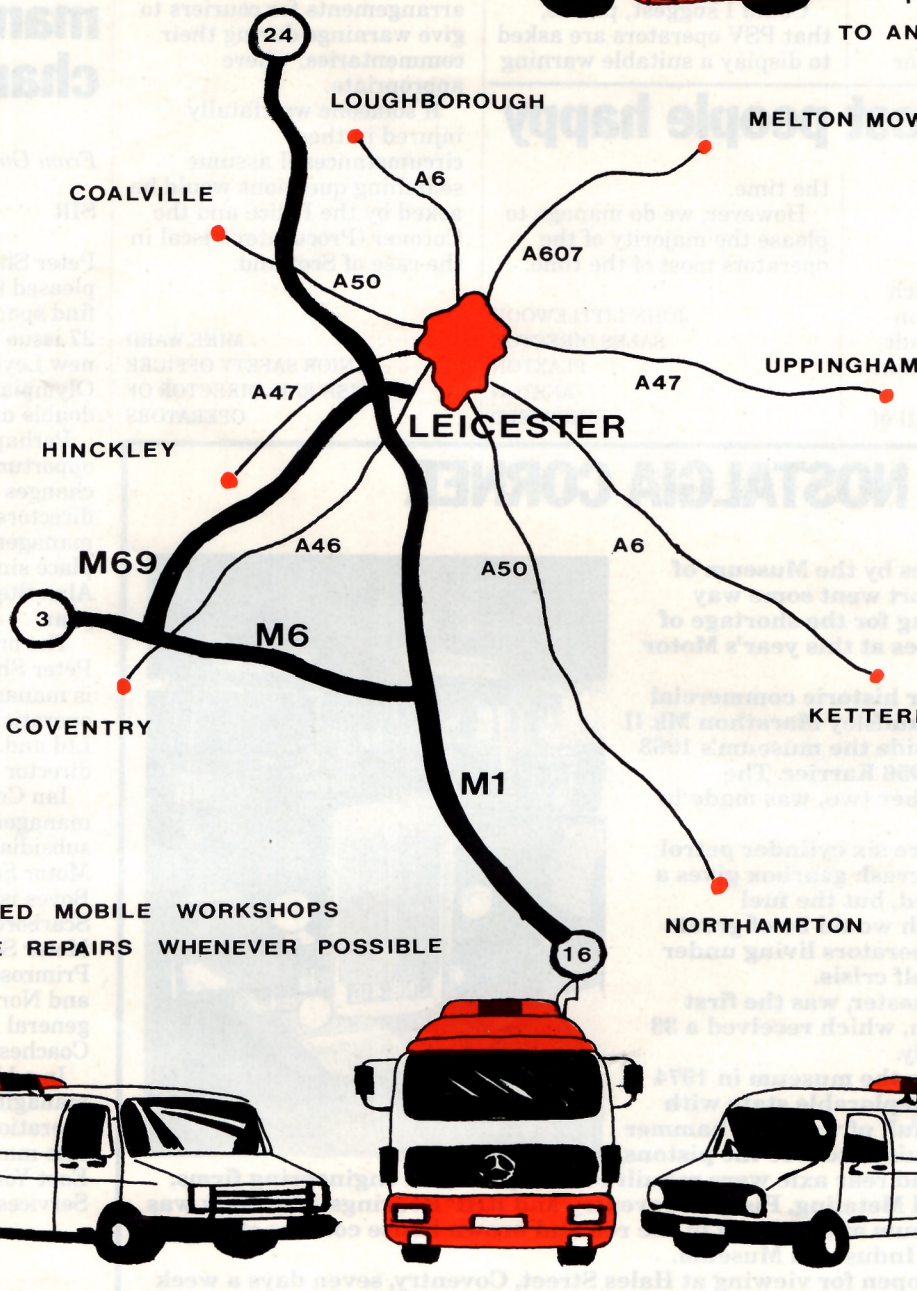

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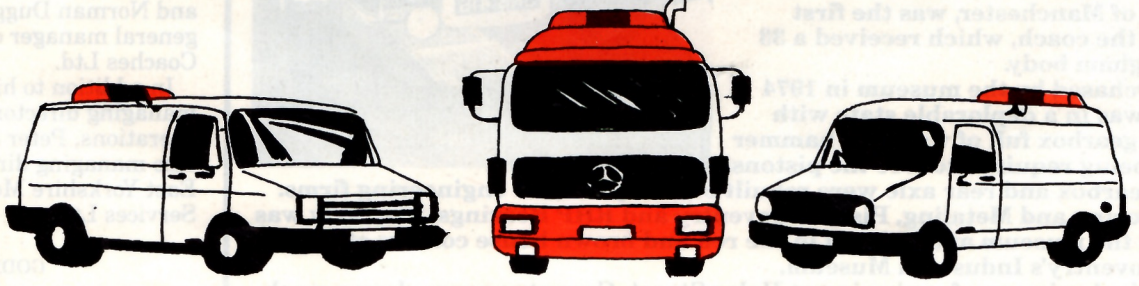

24 HOUR TELEPHONE: 0860 ~ 519561

Verite Baker hits back at critic

From Verite Baker

SIR

Ray Pearson would be absolutely right to blast my article, if I'd been writing as head of a guide booking agency. I wasn't.
Trying to report the views of residents has to be done by writing about their comments and their feelings. When most Westminster residents bought their houses 10, 20, even 30 years ago, tourism was a very minor industry.

After the war was over, residents had the task of rebuilding their village.

So now coaches grind around the narrow streets pointing out attractive mews, squares and streets that were never intended to take tourist traffic.

As a guide trainer, I taught guides to be sensitive to residents' needs, only to find employers insisting on coaches going everywhere.

Years before Datchet brought in restrictions I banned my guides from driving through this village as I considered the roads too narrow.

Coach companies are making money out of using Westminster's streets. But where is the offer to compensate Ebury Street residents whose cellars collapse with the heavy coach traffic? When I first lived in the street there was so little traffic that there weren't any traffic lights.

Although I sold my booking agency some time ago, I now support the coach industry by hiring coaches and am concerned at the way the sheer volume of traffic is causing problems for London coach operators. Don't forget they suffer and probably more than a country operator who is only in town once a month.

Perhaps the old GLC permits should be revived and coaches made to pay to use certain streets - that would sort out the genuine operators from the cowboys that clog up the streets causing problems for everyone.

VERITE BAKER
LONDON SW10

Reader is blue about front cover

From Eric Fitzjohn

SIR

I have been a reader of *Coachmart* for many years and have been favourably impressed with the recent alterations that have been made with the exception of the front cover, which has prompted me to write the following... 'The Demise Of *Coachmart* Design':

The write-ups are excellent and the lay-out is fine,

But for some unknown reason the front page is in decline,

It used to look colourful in red, white and blue,

But now the new format, ugh, a miserable hue,

Please get 'out of mourning' and dispose of the black,

Mr Editor can we have our bright front page back?

ERIC FITZJOHN
OWNER
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An unexpected coach stop!

Mealstop hears tell of what could have been the most costly vehicle door in the history of coaching.

The door was admitted as somewhat suspect when the owner's engineer was asked about the vehicle. Yes, he said, it had malfunctioned.

What was the nature of the malfunction, he was asked? He said sometimes it wouldn't close or would open unexpectedly. Actually, he confessed, the door had opened while the coach was travelling at speed and lurched round a corner.

Pressed, he finally told the enquirer that this had happened as two relief drivers waited to disembark, and both were within a hair's breadth of falling out...

Mealstop

● A NORTHERN operator was somewhat mystified when coaches to Blackpool driven by a part-timer were returned with sand in the boot.

Sand is a hazard of bucket-and-spade trips, but the quantity and regularity which this Irish driver – whose wife ran his cafe while he was driving – returned to the yard each day was quite unusual. The operator decided to follow the next coach and see what happened.

The sand, it turned out, did not come from Blackpool's Golden Mile. It came from Blackpool's builders merchants... Paddy was building an extension and the coach boot was just the thing for bricks and mortar.

● FOR SALE: Desirable one-bedroom detached residence located in any pleasant surroundings.

It comprises two floors with fashionable Victorian fittings including pot-belly stove with back boiler and radiator central heating, enamel bath and brass bed complete with period look.

Included in the sale is a 1964 Routemaster bus, with fully-reconditioned AEC 9.8 litre engine and automatic four-speed gearbox. Bus sports a solid mahogany door.

As you've probably guessed, the bus is, in fact, the one-bedroomed residence, being sold for £10,000 by estate agent William H Brown at Horncastle, Lincolnshire. And very nice too, apart from the problems of unexpected visitors should the owner inadvertently pull up at a bus stop...

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DOUBLE DECKERS
1981 BRISTOL VRT Leyland Engine, ECW, 74 seats, MoT June '91.
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1979 BRISTOL VRT Leyland Engine, ECW, 74 seats, MoT all June '91, 1 only
1975 BRISTOL VRT Leyland Engine, ECW, 74 seats, MoT March '91, choice of 2.
1972 LEYLAND ATLANTEAN 680 Alexander, 74 seats, MoT exp., choice of 2.

1983 LEYLAND TIGER 245 Plaxton Paramount 3500, 49 seats, MoT June '91.
1983 LEYLAND TI... Plaxton Paramount ... SOLD ...oT March '91.
1982 LEYLAND LEOPARD 680 Plaxton Surpreme, 50 reclining seats, MoT May '91.
1981 LEYLAND LEOPARD 680 Plaxton Surpreme, 50 reclining seats, new MoT.
1979 VOLVO B58 Duple Dominant, 53 seats, MoT July '91.
1979 VOLVO B58 Van Hool, 53 seats, MoT June '91.
1979 BEDFORD YMT Duple Dominant, 53 seats, Dec '90.
1977 BRISTOL LHL LEYLAND 101 Engine Plaxton, 53 seats, MoT April '91.
1975 BRISTOL LH LEYLAND 401 Plaxton, 43 seats, Class 5 MoT.

SERVICE BUSES
1974 LEYLAND ... D 680 Manual Ge... Alexandr... SOLD ...53 seats, MoT May '91. S... driver training.

VERY GOOD SELECTION
1977 6-5 & 4-3 LEYLAND NATIONAL MK1 10-3 & 11-3, 49-53 seats, good MoT.

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1987 FREIGHT ROVER SHERPA's Carlyle 16 service seats.
1985 IVECO 60/10, coaches interior, 19 high back seats.

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HEADING FOR THE STARS

A star class system is considered to be the way forward for the British coach industry. Mike Morgan argues that this is the way to get the right rate for the job.

FOR years operators have argued for a system which will do for the coach industry what star classification has done for the hotel industry.

British coach operators complain about not getting the rate for the job. While it is common practice for coach hirers to ring round and get the best price there will always be someone to undercut the rest and do a job for little or no profit.

If customers knew the standard of coach required and there was a pricing structure to match there would be fewer complaints from all concerned.

At present, an Executive class coach is different things to different people. Is it a 1976 Plaxton Elite with tables?, or a 1990 fully equipped coach with every conceivable extra?

Standardisation of description is essential. Customers must know what they want so that rates can be determined accordingly.

The Belgian coach industry has a star system that works. In all other respects it is a remarkably similar market to our own.

With 630 operators the average fleet size is as low as four. Consequently competitive pricing (i.e. doing the same job for less money) is a fact of life.

Spin-offs for the Belgian coach industry have been positive.

However, the introduction of the star system has resurrected interest in coach travel through improved standards. Operators may not have felt direct benefits through improved rates, but rising interest in quality coach travel encourages differential rates for better coaches.

Spin-offs for Belgium's coach manufacturing industry have been positive - a market with distinctive requirements is most easily satisfied by the home producer, and a healthy demand from the home market has been the result.

Belgian coach operator Willy Coreman of Toptours agrees that the system is working for the better. Mr Coreman said: 'At the beginning I thought it was just extra money for the Government, but there are now a lot more luxury coaches in Belgium. I'm glad it is there now. For the people who travel by coach it is good.'

However, he did not believe the system produced extra revenue for operators. 'Customers will ring round for six or seven quotes and take the cheapest.'

This Mercedes is only given a one star rating in Belgium and is used for school work.

He is currently upgrading two five-year-old Van Hool Alizee vehicles from three to four star. Nevertheless Toptours will use seating track to convert the 45 seaters to 49 for summer tours - a practice encouraged by a lack monitoring and control once a coach has been certified.

Mr Coreman said the annual inspection only takes two or three minutes - hardly time for a thorough check.

Customers for new coaches in Belgium are increasingly demanding three or four star specification.

In winter there is only work for this grade of vehicle. Toptours is selling one star Mercedes 0303 coaches which have restricted use on schools contracts and local 'round the church' private hire.

Significantly, Mr Coreman suggested that the benefits to Belgian operators should materialise in 1992 when the higher quality coach fleet can obtain work in neighbouring countries.

Age is a factor in determining classification. Vehicle condition is significant, but older vehicles are normally of inferior specification.

Inevitably a grading system with four categories does not allow for the exceptional. The VIP (or Vip) coach is a new marketing term for the superior coach with hospitality features. A standard four star award is clearly inadequate for one of these vehicles.

Would a star system benefit British coach operators? Yes.

Customers in Belgium are increasingly demanding three or four star spec.

However, the conditions must be right.

- British operators will want to see a financial return on the inevitable cost of such a system;
- To stop customers 'ringing round' for the best price there must be common levels of pricing for each category;
- Built-in checks and controls must prevent abuse of the system - official inspection must be more thorough than the Belgain quick three minute examination;
- The public must be persuaded of the virtues of the system.

Unless these conditions can be met, the Belgian and British experiences will continue to mirror each other.

The travelling public needs to be educated to not only look for improved standards, but to be prepared to pay premium prices for premium coaches.

Otherwise coach operators will continue to experience a levelling up of quality at increasing costs while rates are held down. ▶

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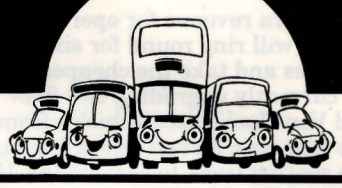

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1977 FORD R1114 PLAXTON, 53 seats (Ford reconditioned engine) power door, MoT 11.05.91. ..... **£3,500**

1983 DAF MB200 DKFL PLAXTON 3200 EXPRESS, 53 seats, ZF automatic gearbox, PA, MoT 30/3/91. Choice of 4. Stock No. M006 ..... **£33,000**

1983 BOVA EUROPA (DAF [illegible]), 44 seats, toilet, servery, curtains, [illegible] 1/90. Stock No. M008. Choice of 4.. ..... **£28,000**

SOLD

1985 LEYLAND TIGER 245 DUPLE CARIBBEAN II, 48 recliners plus courier, toilet, double glazed windows, curtains, seat back tables, power door, drinks, fridge, twin fuel tanks, Eberspacher and driver bunk. ..... **£37,500.**

1985 SCANIA K112 JONCKHEERE P50, 49/51/53 recliners, o/s sunken toilet, o/s centre continental door, driver's bunk, tinted windows, rollo blinds, MoT 1991. Choice of three. Stock Nos. M104, M105 & M106. ..... **£41,500**

1984 SCANIA K112 JONCKHEERE P50, 49 recliners, o/s sunken toilet, o/s centre continental door, driver's bunk, tinted windows, rollo blinds, MoT 1991. Stock No. M102. ..... **£46,500**

OCT '86 OPTARE CITYPACER VOLKSWAGEN, LT55 engine, 5 speed, manual gearbox, 25 d/p seals, MoT 27.7.91. Price **£12,500**

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HOW IT WORKS

Belgium's star rating system is believed to have considerably improved the comfort level of coach fleets.

BELGIAN coaches must obtain at least one star within a compulsory system of quality control before they can carry passengers.

A framework of four categories was imposed in 1986. On side and rear of each coach there must be an official plate, which identifies the level of comfort using stars. Symbols indicate additional features - fridge, servery, wardrobe, air conditioning, video, toilet/washroom.

Manufacturers such as Van Hool must certify the specification of new vehicles. Significant technical data supplied relates to engine power, fridge content and air conditioning output.

Operators pay the Belgium government 1,100 Bfr for certification and a further 1,200 Bfr at annual inspection or when coaches are re-classified.

Four star is the top category - minimum seat pitch of 83 cm allows 44 passenger seats on a 12 metre coach. Courier seat and toilet take up interior space, but the emphasis is on passenger space and comfort.

Air conditioning and double glazing are a must, and there are minimum requirements relating to audio output and luggage accommodation.

Increasing passenger seating at the expense of leg room, deleting air conditioning or tinted glazing, will relegate a coach to three star.

Two star and one star coaches are less powerful, have more seats and fewer creature comforts. These are usually condemned to school contracts.

THE Federation Belge des exploitants d'Autobus et d'Autocars (FBAA) - Belgium's federation of coach operators - believes that the imposition of the star rating system has considerably improved the comfort level of the Belgian coach fleet.

This view is supported by statistical data showing that a decline in the number of coaches has been reversed while the proportion of quality coaches has increased.

Date	1 star	2 star	3 star	4 star	Vehicles
August 1, 1986	28.18%	60.26%	11.04%	0.52%	3,262
December 1, 1987	24.97%	58.63%	14.85%	1.55%	2,896
October 1, 1988	21.8%	55.81%	19.44%	2.85%	3,014
June 1, 1989	20.34%	54.25%	22.09%	3.32%	3,250

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR BELGIAN STAR RATING

Features	4 Star	3 Star	2 Star	1 Star
Engine:				
Power rating - KW per ton	11	11	8.8	7.4
Doors:				
Power exit doors	X	X		
*per 24 passengers				
Comfort:				
Minimum seat pitch	83cm	77cm	72cm	68cm
Seat recline	35 degree	10 degree		
Armrests	X	X		
(there are nine other sub-sections relating to interior comfort)				
Climate:				
Forced air ventilation	X	X		
Air conditioning	X			
Heating:				
Blowers	X	X	X	
Automatic temperature control	X	X	X	
Glazing:				
Double glazing		X	X	
Tinted windows		X		
Side window demisting	X	X	X	
Interior Lighting:				
Individual reading lights	X	X		
Audio System:				
Loudspeakers per passenger	1/4	1/8	1/8	1/8
Drivers microphone	X	X	X	X
Radio	X	X	X	
Luggage:				
Hand luggage space		X	X	Xfor 21 people
Minimum luggage capacity	150 cu.m	120 cu.m	75 cu.m	
Hanging space		X	X	
Fridge:				
0.5 dm3 per passenger	X			

Optional features identified by appropriate symbols:

Fridge, Servery, Wardrobe, Air conditioning, Video, Toilet.

(Above) A four star interior.
(Below) What you can expect to find inside a VIP coach.

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F (89) FORD TRANSIT 2.5 DIESEL 15 seat minibus. Super example of a sought after model, 5 spd box, unmarked cloth seats, side door. 12 months PSV. Be quick, lease purchase or lease **£9,795**
E (88) FREIGHT ROVER 12 seater PSV minibus only 25,000 miles with side loading door, 5 speed box and cloth trim, beautiful condition, all low deposit finance options, top value **£4,995**
E (87/88) FORD TRANSIT diesel/petrol minibuses, choice of 2, 12 seats, 'L' spec with cloth seats, side door etc, both in super condition, lease or buy from **£5,995**
D (87) FORD TRANSIT 2.5 diesel 15 seater crewbuses, choice of 2 exceptionally clean models, both 4 speed overdrive, low mileage from only **£6,495**
A (84) FREIGHT ROVER 18 seater hi top minibus, lovely condition throughout, with unmarked cloth seats, 5 speed box and radio, must be seen, finance available ..... **£2,500 ono**

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FORD TRANSIT 9 SEAT GL BUS, 1989 'F', superb condition throughout, very high equipment level, finished in metallic. A rare opportunity to lease, lease purchase or buy. One only ..... **£8,995 NO VAT.**

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The Belgian coach market

◀ ALTHOUGH much smaller than Britain's, the Belgian coach industry has a similar size profile. With a population of 10 million, it supports 630 coach operators.

There are a few large operators running more than 25 vehicles, but the average fleet size is only four.

The following picture of the Belgian coach industry in 1988 was supplied by the Belgian coach operators association - Federation Belge des exploitants d'Autobus et d'Autocars.

Number of operators	630
Number of coaches in use	2,642
Number of kilometers covered	129,409,012
Kilometers/passengers	4,822,074,198
Average number of kilometers/coach	48,981
Number of passengers	11,319,423
Total revenue	4,303,625,848 Bfr
Total number of tours	303,089
among which - Belgium	237,859
and Europe	65,230
Netherlands	16,666
France	15,896
Germany	11,928
Spain	5,577
Luxemburg	4,455
Italy	3,199
Austria	3,047
Switzerland	1,332
Great Britain	966

A remarkable one in five destinations is outside Belgium. These long distance trips are the money earners which justify the high specification three and four star coaches.

The village of Tremelo in the north of Belgium could easily be somewhere in the UK. It boasts four operators. However, all provide undercover fleet accommodation and three or four star vehicles dominate.

Trading as Luxitour, Veumeulan provides three star vehicles for Agfa-Gaevert works contracts covering the whole Antwerp region - sufficient to justify two or three new coaches each year.

The Damiaan brothers run separate companies - one operating unusual Van Hool bodied Renault FL1s required specially for a Renault contract.

A small number of one star coaches are retained for local use, but not one of these four Tremelo operators runs local bus services.

Belgium Bus Services

Bus services in Belgium are state controlled.

During 1990, local bus service reorganisation lead to the dissolution of the railways controlled bus fleet (SNCV-NMVB) and the establishment of three national authorities covering the regions of Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. Six municipal companies in Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, Ghent, Liege and Verviers being integrated into the new authorities.

Some private operators do operate on contract to the state owned bus companies with rates based on price per kilometer. Vehicles conform in all respects to those of the public company and drivers receive the same pay.

Contracts awarded by SNCV-NMVB in 1988

64,179,000 kilometers covered or 38.24 percent of the total
74,000,000 passengers carried
1,300 buses
145 firms
3,000 staff members

Other local bus services are designated special regular services and can only be authorised where insufficient public transport exists.

Schools contracts are among these special bus services. Although there are variations between Flemish and French speaking districts, contracts lasting up to seven years are awarded by tender.

The four star VIP quality badge.

This three star coach is being upgraded to four star specification.

Belgian Cost Comparisons

(Exchange rate of 60 Bfr to the £ assumed)

	Bfr	£
New EOS coach	8,500,000	141,666
Drivers' pay per 12 hour day	2,950	49
Drivers' monthly salary	50,000	833
School contract per day	3/4,000	50/66
Single deck VIP coach rate	41 per km	1 per mile
Double deck VIP coach rate	56 per km	1.5 per mile
VIP single deck daily min	17,500	292
Three star rate	32/38.5 per km	0.86/1
100 km one star private hire	5850	97.50
(60 mile return) three star	6,500/7,500	108/125

HARD WORK BRINGS IN THE FRANCS

Toptours became one of Belgium's premier operators by staying one step ahead of the competition. Mike Morgan talked to proprietor Willy Coreman.

'It's hard work... family work. Seven days a week, every week, with no let- up from constantly taking risks.'

This statement by Belgian operator Willy Coreman will be echoed by every coach operator in the UK.

After 38 years in coaching, Mr Coreman's business has grown to a fleet size of 50. Exceptional by Belgian standards, but reflecting his ability to make a success of opportunities. Trading as Toptours, the company is based at Aarshot, north of Brussels.

Willy Coreman's father, Leonard, started the business in 1952 - when Van Hool employed 52 workers. A 1954 'old timer' Mercedes Daimler Benz 3500 17 seater is retained for special hire, but the company has moved a long way from these roots to the provision of three and four star coaches.

His success and professionalism make him the ideal person to reflect on the state of the industry in 1990. Although the symbols of success in another country may be misleading, it is significant that Mr Coreman can boast undercover garage space for his coach fleet and a small collection of Mercedes Benz cars.

His family benefits from private outdoor swimming pool and tennis court and his 21-year-old son has a new pine lodge behind the garage.

Nevertheless their's is an experience very close to that of UK operators. The work is long and hard and his motivation for staying in the industry has a familiar ring.

When asked if a vehicle could be moved to a more advantageous position for photographs, Mr Coreman jumped behind the wheel of his latest Van Hool Astromega and swiftly moved it off the pits and out into the September sunshine.

Willy Coreman: loves driving his coaches.

He loves driving. He relies on part-time drivers to help out on two driver jobs, but frequently volunteers himself or other members of the family - his son, daughter, father and brother-in-law all drive.

The Toptours fleet contains 35 coaches and 15 vehicles retained for schools. Said Mr Coreman: 'I shall not be renewing these five/seven year contracts at current rates. They don't pay enough.'

There are two growth areas identified in the Belgian coach market - corporate work and passengers in wheelchairs. Toptours has recently acquired its second VIP coach.

Corporate work and wheelchair-bound passengers represent two growth areas in Belgium.

The first, VIP 20, is a single deck MAN powered Van Hool complete vehicle with 20 leather trimmed seats and an impressive specification. Going one better is VIP 40 - a double deck Van Hool Astromega in similar style.

At the time of my visit, VIP 40 was in its special garage waiting for the right sort of work. Its owner said: 'I'm prepared to keep it in the garage rather than use it on passengers who have not paid for it.'

He preferred to hire-in when short of a three star coach. After charging 38.5 Bfr per km he sub-contracted on one occasion to a competitor needing work for a three-month-old coach with air conditioning asking 32 Bfr per km.

VIP work is plentiful during the winter. For next summer, extra business will be generated by a special brochure for distribution to directors of big

Belgian coaches are mechanically tested three times a year.

business in the area.

The venture into dual-use wheelchair-accessible coaches started with the conversion by Van Hool of a Mercedes Benz powered Jonckheere Bermuda. Sufficient interest justified an order for a new Van Hool T815 Acron with wheelchair lift and removable seats on tracking. Mr Coreman predicts increased demand for these vehicles.

He does not value the Belgian star system as a way of boosting rates: 'There is no gain to the operator, but there is for the customer.' The Belgian coach federation has given price guidelines, but competing operators use them to push down prices.

The Belgian star system helps customers.

By contrast, he is able to charge more for 'Royal Class' seating. Extra seat recline, legroom and leg rests in a 12 metre coach seating 30/32 attract a 33 percent premium rate.

More conventional 'bread and butter' work consists of day excursions, and summer tours sold through the Toptours name. Week tours pay the higher return with customers wanting the best in luxury coaches.

Local private hire is known as 'round the church' jobs. They are normally the preserve of one star 'schools' coaches. Most of these are Mercedes Benz 0303s or Jonckheere bodied 28 seaters.

Regular winter ski trips are packaged as Skibus. Stored in one corner of the Aarshot garage are 600 sets of skis. According to Mr Coreman, the cost of buying 100 new skis this year will be recovered in one season - as long as it snows.

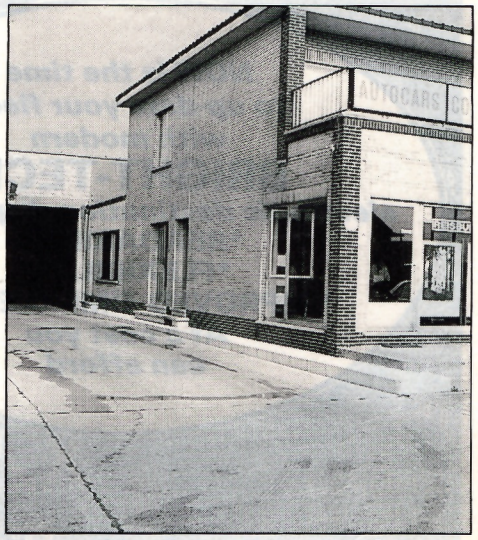
Belgian coach operators grumble about the same issues discussed at any meeting of their British counterparts.

Although new coaches can not be leased because of C licence (operator licence) provision, this does not prevent small operators with big ideas borrowing heavily without appreciating the heavy interest commitment.

Consequently these are the operators chasing work at any cost.

Operator licences are granted after successful completion of one year course with final exam (similar but longer than the CPC). Financial standing is represented by a bank deposit of 500,000 Bfr (£8,333) per coach. For Toptours this means a deposit of over £250,000, but Mr Coreman thinks it is too easy to set up.

He was critical of the three times per year mechanical test on all coaches. 'One man does nothing else but take a vehicle to technical control for test.' The closest testing station is 18 km away, but the Toptours fleet is taken a further 14 km - 'It is the best.'



Toptours' Aarshot premises: complete with undercover space for 50 coaches.

Mr Coreman's criticism of the inconvenience caused by the 10 minute test was put into perspective when I explained the UK's more thorough testing procedure.

Spares storage for 50 vehicles has been converted into a profit opportunity. On an adjacent site, Mr Coreman has opened up his stores as a shop selling spare parts for coaches and private cars. Stock turnover has been turned to advantage.

Mr Coreman displayed well deserved pride in Toptours' 38 year development. Like so many British operators he would not find the same job satisfaction in anything else.

The spiral of increasing hard work is difficult to break in these circumstances, particularly when keeping ahead of the competition brings such success.

Willy Coreman's latest Van Hool Astromega.

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LITTLE BILLY HEADS EAST

The sun is setting on a 40-year-old coach's career in Britain, but a new one awaits it in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Nigel Skill and Little Billy: special partnership is coming to an end.

ALEX Smith Coachways of Nottingham is to lose an old friend this week - the 40-year-old Bedford Duple Vista which has served it well for four years is going to Japan.

The firm's director Nigel Skill admits to a little sadness tinged with a little gratitude that the coach fondly nicknamed Little Billy has been sold to a Japanese businessman.

'You can get a bit attached to vehicles,' he said. 'He has very much been a working part of the fleet, but not every driver can cope with driving him.'

The little ash-framed coach - boasting a mighty 28 bhp engine - has had plenty of work to do taking Alex Smith Coachways' tourists around the local forests of Nottingham and even further afield.

He was the result of two years' hard work for Nigel and his brother Simon, directors of Alex Smith and Skills of Radford. He was restored piecemeal to showroom condition and, despite his value as a classic, was clocking up 6,500 miles a year and up to six days work a week.

The coach was originally used by Mountain Goat of Ambleside for stage carriage work then when it broke down, the vehicle was left on the railway sidings at Windermere. Little Billy stood there two years before Skills bought and collected him in 1984.

The restoration needed some crafts which the Skills had feared may have died. Rebuilding the ash frame required the help of an ex-Willowbrook carpenter who grafted in new wood over a period of months. The chippie has since died.

Little Billy was being used up to six days a week.

The coach may have been the oldest in current use, says Nigel Skill. Most of its work was with excursions and weddings, but it was also used on a registered service for Nottingham City Council on the Sherwood Forester network, and has been used for a series of Herriot Country and Emmerdale Farm theme weekends. It has even been used by Central TV for children's series.

'The types of customer who rode in Billy varied,' said Nigel Skill. 'He seemed to appeal to all ages. One day it was a party of children off to the seaside and the next a group of pensioners on an afternoon trip.'

Ageing vehicles also appeal to Nigel who, despite vowing never to restore another classic after the hard graft exerted on Billy, has since restored a vintage Rolls Royce which is used on weddings alongside two other classics.

Mr Skill said the paperwork to export the coach has taken a considerable time for the Japanese client - who is associated with manufacturing giant Mitsubishi Corporation - to sort out, but the Bedford has now had the all-clear.

The vehicle is one of the first commercials of its type to be exported to Japan, and the classification of it for tax and export proved a lengthy process. Coaches in Japan are also subject to a maximum width, and Billy scraped in with just inches to spare.

'We were even asked if it was possible to convert it to lead-free petrol for use in Japan. We could have done it, but in the end it proved unnecessary,' said Nigel. 'Little Billy's buyer has hinted that he will be used ferrying clients of Mitsubishi about on corporate business.'

The price paid? He wasn't saying...

LICENCE NEWS

■ TRANSPORT manager problems have lead to the refusal of an application by Ian Playford and Brian Seaman - trading as Sanda Travel, of Welwyn Garden City - for a new international licence authorising the operation of two vehicles.

Metropolitan traffic commissioner Air Vice Marshal Ronald Ashford said he was not satisfied that the requirement as to professional competence was met.

He concluded that the nominated transport manager, Mr Seaman, did not qualify to hold a Certificate of Professional Competence under the 'grandfather rights' provisions.

And he said a further application meeting all the statutory criteria would have to be submitted.

■ R LEWIS and F Jones - who trade as L & J Coach Hire, of Cwmaman, Aberdare - have had their licence suspension lifted.

South Wales traffic commissioner Mr John Mervyn Pugh suspended the licence at a Cardiff public inquiry in August because of the company's maintenance record until all its vehicles passed the MOT test.

The suspension was lifted at a further public inquiry after the firm produced new test certificates in respect of the eight vehicles it possesses.

■ THE vehicle authorisation on the licence held by Mr Gordon Miles - trading as Miles Coaches, of Shrivenham, Wiltshire - has been cut from ten vehicles to eight by South Eastern traffic commissioner Brigadier Michael Turner at an Eastbourne public inquiry.

LEGAL NEWS

■ PEOPLE working in small manufacturing firms run a greater risk of suffering a serious accident than those in larger companies – says a report out this week.
The Health and Safety Executive's report 'Safety Pays' shows that health and safety is good for business and illustrates the advantages of taking advice...and the costs of not doing so.
Copies of this and an updated edition of the HSE's small business best seller 'Essentials of Health and Safety at Work' are availble from Health and Safety Executive, Baynards House, 1 Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4TF (Tel: 071 243 6000).

Operators told to keep to registered service schedules

A DEPUTY traffic commissioner has warned operators of the importance of sticking to their registered services schedule.

Mr Kenneth Birchall made his comments in renewing for one year the two vehicle PSV operator's licence held by Mr Gordon Seward, trading as Rheda Cabs/Rheda Bus, of Cumbria

He told a Manchester public inquiry that the original licence had been granted for one year 12 months ago. A complaint had been received from a member of the public, regarding a failure to carry out a service.

DTp traffic examiner Mr S J Davidson said a letter had been received complaining that Mr Seward had failed to operate a service at Safeways at Workington.

He visited Safeways on May 16 and waited for the bus to arrive at the scheduled time of 16.37 hours. The bus failed to turn up.

When interviewed, Mr Seward said he had only two passengers wanting to go to Safeways while he had been operating the service and had thought that if there were no passengers then he did not have to operate.

Mr Seward held a restricted licence as his main business was taxis, although none were being operated at the time.

Mr Seward said buses were often delayed when running into Workington and he had thought he had to stick to the times on the timetable.

He was getting in five or 10 minutes late, so on the day concerned he just turned around to pick up the passengers he could see waiting at the bus stop. It would have taken another 15 minutes to go to Safeways.

Mr Seward said he was still running the service, but was having trouble getting drivers. He had trained a young girl by putting her through the PSV driving test, but she had to give up driving for medical reasons.

At the moment he was training somebody else, and he was waiting for him to pass the test. Once the person concerned had passed, he could once again concentrate on his taxis.

Mr Seward did not wish to lose the service. It was not making a large profit and was just covering the running costs.

DTp traffic manager reported non arrival of bus.

He was confident that his main occupation was the taxi business, but until the driver had passed his test he would have to continue driving the bus.

After Mr Birchall said the accounts produced showed a substantial deficit, Mr Seward said there was revenue to come in from fuel duty and other rebates.

Mr Seward said it was difficult to explain, but people in the area were slow to accept something new. He believed the bus route would become very popular in the future as passengers were telling him that the service was the best thing that had happened for a long time.

At the moment his difficulty was getting the driver through his PSV driving test, but he was confident that he would pass this time.

Mr Birchall said Mr Seward had probably said too much about the local people. He hoped Mr Seward realised the importance of sticking to the service schedule and that there was not a reoccurrence of what had happened.

He would want to see the trading figures for one year when the licence again fell due for renewal.

Action may be taken over maintenance problems

METROPOLITAN traffic commissioner Air Vice Marshal Ronald Ashford has said he will revoke an operator's licence unless he improves his vehicle maintenance.

Mr N H Tyler - trading as Golden Rose Coaches, of Hitchin - was called to a disciplinary hearing following an adverse report from the DTp's vehicle inspectorate.

The commissioner said there has to be a significant and sustained improvement in the maintenance of Mr Tyler's vehicles and that they and the maintenance records must be kept impeccably in the future.

Ex-busman gets licence

FORMER Merseyside bus driver Mr E J Heys has been granted a new two vehicle PSV licence.

Mr Heys - trading as Heys Travel, of Bootle - applied for a national licence at a Manchester public inquiry.

He told North Western traffic commissioner Mr Martin Albu that he had previously been a PSV driver, working on stage carriage and private hire as a run-up to obtaining his own vehicle.

Mr Heys said a vehicle had already been acquired, but when questioned by Mr Martin Albu, said it was not being used at present.

He said the financial evidence produced referred to one vehicle, bought with his own cash with the balance being paid in instalments until November. Mr Heys added that he had an overdraft facility with his bank.

He thought he would be able to make a real living out of his proposed operation and was applying for a second vehicle with the future in mind. Mr Heys said maintenance was to be contracted out.

In granting the licence, Mr Albu wished Mr Heys well, but warned that he needed to keep an eye on his finances.

Operated internationally without the proper authority

LANCASHIRE operator Terence Keating, said to have carried out international operations for 15 months without authority, has had his national licence changed to an international one.

North Western deputy traffic commissioner Mr Kenneth Birchall also renewed Mr Keating's licence for a two year period and increased authorisation from two to four vehicles.

DTp traffic examiner Mr Gary Shepherd told a Manchester public inquiry that he had made enquiries in July following a complaint from another operator about unauthorised international operations.

He discovered that Mr Keating's previous transport manager had left his employment and a Mr Paul Stone, who also had his own operator's licence, had been employed in his place.

When Mr Keating - who trades as A One Travel in Heywood - commenced operation all his work was in the UK, and when interviewed he said he was unaware that an international licence was needed for international work.

Rival operator complained about unauthorised international operations.

Mr Keating's tachograph charts showed the regular use of two vehicles in April, May, and June 1990 on international work, said Mr Shepherd.

The work was obtained on contract from Land Travel, of Bath, for holidays in Italy and continental weekend breaks.

It appeared that Mr Keating had been carrying out international work for some 15 months. A report had been submitted which could lead to a prosecution being mounted.

Mr Keating said he had been under the impression that an international licence was only a formality, and he had been unaware of the serious implications.

Asked why he had applied for an international licence in November 1989 and then withdrawn the application in January 1990, Mr Keating said that was due to his transport manager leaving.

It had become apparent at that time that an international licence was needed.

His present transport manager, Mr Stone, had been with him for about nine months. Mr Stone had operated a company in Rochdale called Enterprise Executive Travel.

Mr Keating said he had been in business for nine to 10 years and had operated without an international licence for about 13 months.

For the first five years he had operated on a restricted licence using minibuses. He then applied for a standard national licence.

Mr Keating was unaware he needed licence.

There had been a previous public inquiry because of problems over his transport manager, one having left, and then he was let down. He had never had any trouble with the ministry over maintenance.

Granting the licence, Mr Birchall warned that if there were any more doubts over Mr Keating's authority to operate, the consequences would be more severe than on this occasion.

Convictions lead to warning

WILLIAMS Motors (Cwmdu) Ltd has been warned about its future conduct after being convicted of a variety of offences.

South Wales traffic commissioner Mr John Mervyn Pugh had been considering taking disciplinary action against the 27 vehicle licence held by the company, which trades as Williams Coaches Richway, at a Cardiff public inquiry.

Williams had been convicted of employing an unlicensed driver to drive a public service vehicle, of using a public service vehicle without a fire extinguisher, of using a public service vehicle without a first aid kit, and of failing to display a PSV operator's licence identity disc.

For the company, in business for 25 years, it was said the minibus concerned was not part of its public service fleet, but was one that was kept for hiring out to scout and guide groups and the like.

The offences occurred when an eight seater minibus used on school work was off the road under repair and the driver was told to take the minibus concerned, without a thought being given to the fact that it was a hire vehicle and not part of the PSV fleet.

Mr Mervyn Pugh decided to take no action after the company's managing director said he was willing to attend a 'new operators' seminar' and had already arranged to attend a vehicle examiners' course run by the DTp's Vehicle Inspectorate, in order to bring himself up to date.

Company given 20 vehicle go-ahead

Mersey Bus: ex-employees have now formed Wirralbus.

WIRRALBUS Ltd, a company formed by former employees of Mersey Bus, has been granted a new national licence authorising the operation of 20 vehicles.

North Western deputy traffic commissioner Mr Kenneth Birchall said the company, of Rock Ferry, had been called to a public inquiry because of the large number of vehicles being initially applied for.

Mr Alan Stewart, one of three directors of the company, said it had been formed to carry out stage carriage work, operating both double and single decked vehicles.

The maintenance was to be carried out by the company, which would employ two fitters initially, but would increase to three after the first three months.

It was proposed to start with an initial ten vehicles, and another eight would follow in three months time.

A total of 14 drivers, two fitters, one body work man and two cleaners would be employed. The three directors all held PSV driving licences.

Questioned by Mr Birchall, Mr Stewart said he had previously been employed by Liverline and before that by Mersey Bus. The two other directors were also previously with Mersey Bus.

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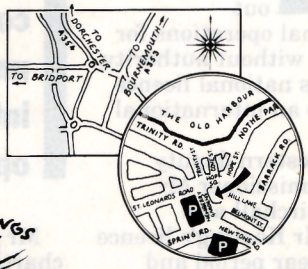

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BEDFORD CF TWIN WHEEL, 12 seater, petrol, non-PSV, immaculate. 1 year's MoT. **£2,750**

FORD TRANSIT, 1979, 8-12 seats, petrol. **£795**

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FINANCE ARRANGED

(31836/MB)

Weymouth is a southern belle

Mark Williams follows in royal footsteps and samples the delights of Weymouth.

THERE are few bigger draws for summer crowds than the lure of the golden sands of the south coast.

Since George III took the Duke of Gloucester's advice and bathed in the health-giving briny of Weymouth bay, the Dorset resort has been blessed with popularity as a seaside town. Never mind that it is also a busy fishing port and ferryport, Weymouth is the epitome of the Kiss-me-quick holiday.

Sadly, the depth of history surrounding the town has been swamped in a tide of gift shops, ice cream bars and amusement arcades. That is, until this year. Long a part of the seedier side of Weymouth's harbour, Devenish decided to close the doors of its brewery and move out to Redruth, leaving behind a massive brick building.

Devenish could have sold the brewhouse, but instead saw both profit and purpose in opening it as an attraction... an attraction based on the dusty exhibits of the local museum.

Museums are not considered an attraction in holiday towns, yet the new Brewer's Quay development proves they can be. With its interactive Timewalk display, Brewer's Quay has managed to blow the dust off the old museum's collection and bring it to life.

The Timewalk will remind operators of the Jorvik Centre in York, and since it shares the same designer, that's no surprise. A maze of an audio-visual display, some realistic models, imaginative construction and some of the most revolting smells imaginable go together to tell visitors a great deal about Weymouth's ancient and modern history.

Taking parties of 15 a time on a tour which lasts around 40 minutes, the Timewalk can handle a coachload in 20 minutes from arrival to entering the exhibition. Visitors are guided round and, when they emerge, get to see the old brewhouse with its copper vats. From the Brewer's Tale exhibition onwards, there is still a great deal more to see.

The Brewer's Quay development also houses a coffee shop, craft shop, pub, plush bar, restaurant, gift shop... and all under the one roof. The undercover nature of the shops make them ideal for groups even when the visitors are elderly or the visit is in bad weather.

A great deal of attention has been paid to coach visits for sound economic reason, and Devenish is quite candid about its intention to develop this side of the Brewer's Quay business whatever the cost. Already, the set-down and pick-up point is directly outside the entrance in a No Parking zone. Coaches continue round the building to 30 free parking bays at the back.

Realistically, Devenish is prepared for those coaches to remain parked for a few hours. The site, only a stone's throw from the town centre, is ideal for a slightly longer excursion than Brewer's Quay alone. But get it while it's hot... if the free coach parking gets too popular, Devenish says it may have to rethink this policy.

Brewer's Quay is open from 10 am to 6 pm - later in summer - right through the year, with a particular interest in promoting the historical side to schools and colleges. Within the complex is a new lecture hall in which children or students who have visited the light-hearted Timewalk can delve into the history in more depth with lecturers. It's a selling point which operators can use heavily as school excursion business picks up.

As attractions go, Brewer's Quay Timewalk is fairly priced. Group rate is £2.50 for adults against a £2.95 standard entry fee. There are reductions to £1.50 for children and £1.75 for OAPs. This is under revision, so a 'phone call to check current prices is essential.

The development of Brewer's Quay is by no means over. The Timewalk is being further developed as is the rest of the vacant space in the main building. When *Coachmart* visited, the finishing touches were being applied to a gallery which will house short-term exhibitions of everything from local art to local industry. By next summer, a full programme of exhibitions will be underway.

Devenish is new to tourism and new to the vagaries of coach operation. As a result, it is anxious to make its Brewer's Quay package attractive from the start. Group bookings should start with a 'phone call to Liz Wells, on 0305 777622, who will be able to send brochures and publicity material and give any other advice or help.

Weymouth has seen many changes, from busy sea port to a major leisure sailing centre, from a centre of southern smuggling to a seaside resort. Brewer's Quay is one more small change in its history, and one which definitely adds to the town's appeal to tourists and coach operators.

Weymouth Timewalk: tells the story of the southern resort.

Premier deals are on offer

PREMIER House - the fast-growing small hotels, inns and pub food group - is offering group travel organisers a range of package deals.

The company has just launched the new season's brochures covering its 22 County Inns at locations around the country with group rates starting from as little as £17 per person per night.

Tour organisers are being offered discounts - the group rates have been held from last year - and there are new ideas for theme breaks including 'A Day at the Races', and 'Beaujolais Nouveau' weekends.

Premier House is approaching more than 3,000 travel organisers and coach firms providing them with special offer ideas.

Marketing manager Wendy Edwards said: 'When organising group tours, very often the criteria for the visit is a particular attraction in the area and accommodation is a secondary thought.

'But we have top quality hotels at affordable prices in some of the most popular tourist spots in the country. In addition, we have organised theme weekends and even evening entertainment where required, providing operators with many good reasons to bring their groups to County Inns.'

The main directory includes all 22 inns and features a guide to all amenities.

For more information contact County Inns' central reservations on 0606 330244.

Och aye it's the Japanese

MORE than 1,500 Japanese artists and performers will be in Glasgow later this year for Scotland Japan Week.

This - the fifth Japan week to be held in Europe - will run from November 26 to December 2.

During the seven day festival there will be an opportunity to experience everything from martial arts and kite flying to archers on horseback, Japanese theatre and traditional music, and displays by Japanese craftsmen.

Venues being used in Glasgow include the City Chambers, King's Theatre, Kelvin Hall and the Barbizon Gallery.

Eddie Friel, chief executive of Greater Glasgow Tourist Board, said: 'Scotland Japan 1990 will reap enormous benefits for Scotland and Glasgow in particular.

'Japan is the world's fastest growing outbound tourist market and the high prominence which this event will give us in Japan is one very positive way to ensure that Glasgow is recognised by the Japanese as a major European destination.'

Ring 041 204 4739 for details.

Aladdin Tours conjures up special breaks

ALADDIN Tours in conjunction with Sally Ferries has launched a special 'Winter Warmer' programme aimed at boosting business for coach operators... with added cash-based incentives.

The excursions are available from January to March and feature one and two night stays from only £25 for Paris and £23 for Amsterdam for hotel accommodation and ferry.

For each passenger travelling, the operator will earn points that can be redeemed for gift vouchers from Marks and Spencer, Trusthouse Forte, Wines and Spirits and ABTA Holidays.

It's said these type of incentives can then be shared among reservations and sales staff.

Aladdin Tours can be contacted on 0234 713613.

The Blitz is remembered

COVENTRY'S Museum of British Road Transport is to stage a series of walk-through displays evoking the Blitz which devastated the city 50 years ago.

The displays are just part of Coventry's events marking Germany's attack on the city which reached a peak on November 14, 1940.

The museum's new Blitz scenes describe and bring to life with props the drama and devastation of that night and the aftermath the following morning.

Chris Boyce amid the Coventry devastation scenes.

Specific events portrayed in sequence in the display are: the outbreak of war; an air raid taking place; a bombed street scene; an unexploded 1000 lb bomb lying in a factory; and the city council sitting in emergency session.

Chris Boyce, museum development manager, said: 'Coventry was a vital centre in Britain's war effort - making cars, aero engines and military vehicles, so our aim has been to explain the relationship between the Blitz and the city's heritage of car manufacture.'

Chris Boyce is available on 0203 832425.

Motorways are magic

HOTELIER David Lindsay is calling on coach operators to sell 'motorway magic' to their groups.

The general manager of the Swallow Hotel on the M1 at South Normanton is already attracting more than two dozen groups annually to the 160-plus room Derbyshire hotel.

He says that tariffs from £27 half board are appealing to operators responding to the 'two hour factor' - the optimum journey time for short breaks.

Mr Lindsay said: 'I would like to dispel the myth about motorway hotels that they are unpopular or unappealing.

'Among major sightseeing possibilities within a short distance of Junction 28 are top attractions like Chatsworth, the Robin Hood Centre, Alton Towers, the American Adventure and the Peak District.

'In these circumstances any operator ignoring a four star hotel for under £30 with its own parking, luxury leisure club and quiet relaxed setting, could be making a misjudgement.'

You can speak to him on 0773 812000.

Travel fair will debut in 1992

A NEW travel fair will be launched at the NEC Birmingham in March 1992.

The new UK Travel Trade Fair - sponsored by the English, Wales and Northern Ireland Boards - will be aimed mainly at domestic tour and coach operators, incoming tour operators and group travel operators, plus overseas agents.

Taking place every three years, it will replace TravelPact and MOOT, the Wales Tourist Board and the ETB's own trade exhibitions in 1992, but these will go-ahead as usual in the intervening years up to the second UK Travel Trade Fair in 1995.

Products from all four home countries will be among exhibits at the Fair.

Contact the Moot '91 office at the English Tourist Board on 081 846 9000.

COACHES WELCOME

BLACKPOOL

FABULOUS CABARET WINTER BARGAIN BREAKS
NOVEMBER TO APRIL

WELLINGTON HOUSE
20/22 CO-OP STREET, BLACKPOOL, LANCS

This friendly family-run hotel offers 26 bedrooms, all with TV, tea/coffee-making facilities (some rooms en suite)
Friday – Sunday. 2 nights bed and breakfast
Fabulous choice of menu, or candlelight dinner Saturday
(free bottle of wine per couple)
Optional Sunday lunch

Book with complete confidence on:

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NOW TAKING 1991 BOOKINGS (14123/HO)

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9 and 11 Barton Avenue, Blackpool FY1 6AP.
Tel: (0253) 44587

★ 30 bedrooms ★ Licensed ★ Full central heating

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WEEKEND
7-9th DECEMBER 1990

Friday – Hot Pot Supper : Saturday – Breakfast, Lunch, Evening Dinner
Sunday – Depart after Breakfast
Cabaret Friday and Saturday evening. £33 per person including VAT
Phone now for coach party details (14345/HO)

ATTENTION ALL COACH OPERATORS

Why not treat your customers to a winter shopping weekend in

BLACKPOOL
Nov to Dec

at only £40 per person. 10% off all coaches

Including 5 course evening dinner, disco, Friday night, top cabaret Saturday night, full central heating, superb food, full coaches – driver free.

Telephone 0253 52501
Jeanette & Arthur Littlewood (14352/CW)

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Close to the B4114 with easy access to M1, M69 and A5.
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Morning coffee.
Lunches Mon-Sat.
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Catering and seating for up to 50. Bar snacks. Darts. Pool. Bar Skittles.
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For morning coffee and biscuits. 3-course party lunches. Yorkshire high teas.
Grants award-winning Hotel is situated in quiet road just along from the famous Valley Gardens and only 2 minutes from the main shopping area.
Send for our 1991 menus:
Grants Hotel, Swan Road, Harrogate HG1 2SS
Telephone: 0423 560666 or Fax: 0423 502550
(14365/HO)

LINCOLNSHIRE

Queen's Hotel
49 Scarborough Avenue
SKEGNESS

Now under new management
Mrs Sylvia Gordon would like to welcome coach parties to the Queen's Hotel, situated just off the sea front
★ 26 Bedrooms, many en suite
★ Tea making facilities in all rooms
★ TV lounge ★ Very large Dining Room
★ Licensed Bar ★ Entertainment 3 nights a week
★ Excellent atmosphere ★ Wide varied menu
(5 course evening meal)
40 or over – driver stays free – 50 or over – 1 extra stays free
Try our New Year Party, 3 full days, fun, food, festivities.
Reductions for coach parties.
BOOK YOUR 1991 HOLIDAY NOW ON (14108/UN)
0754 2073

ARGOSY HOTEL

30 BALMORAL ROAD
BLACKPOOL FY4 1HR
Telephone (0253) 41896

Situated next to the Pleasure Beach, this friendly family run licensed establishment offers weekly cabaret and telephones, TVs and tea making facilities in all rooms.

NOW TAKING 1991 BOOKINGS

Minimum group size to allow free place for driver/courier 40
(14501/HO)

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This luxury hotel has 31 en-suite rooms all with colour TV, tea/coffee facilities, heated outdoor pool, live entertainment choice of a fine menu.

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30 bedrooms en suite, totally refurbished, tea making facilities, telephones, colour TVs, centrally heated throughout, within walking distance of the Festival Theatre and town centre.

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(03502) 462

Coach lunches welcome at both hotels

Our position makes us an ideal centre for a week's stay in the Perthshire Highlands.

SMAILE FAMILY HOTELS
where a warm welcome awaits you
(13522/HO)

COACHES WELCOME

DEVON AND CORNWALL

NEWQUAY

Arundell Hotel, Mountwise, Cornwall

A friendly family run hotel, centrally situated with panoramic sea views and ample parking, offering full English breakfast and varied menus. Under personal supervision of chief proprietor.

★ 36 rooms, all en suite, all with colour TV, radio, telephone, Intercom, tea making facilities.
★ Entertainment 6 nights a week in our large bar with dance floor.
★ Full central heating, laundry and ironing facilities. ★ Lift
★ Heated indoor pool ★ Driver free ★ Sauna ★ Solarium ★ Spa pool.

OPEN ALL YEAR

Now taking bookings for 1991

Contact Audrey Milne on (0637) 872481

(14109/HO)

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Licensed, family run, 21 bedrooms, home cooking, all rooms have TC and CT, some en suite.
Entertainment and dancing available nightly.
Close to beach and all amenities.
Price from £75 to £90 BB&E. Open all year.
Midweek, winter and weekend breaks.
Coaches welcome – driver free.
Reduction to coach parties.

Phone Mathew on 0803 553238 anytime

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(14346/HO)

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Telephone (0803) 605440

This family run hotel has 26 rooms, all en suite, overlooking seafront. All rooms with tea/coffee making facilities, colour televisions and direct dial telephones. Entertainment within hotel twice weekly. Heated swimming pool.

Coach Operators – call us to discuss your 1991 requirements!

(9183/HO)

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This delightful hotel overlooks Goodrington Sands and offers:

★ 30 rooms (mostly en suite)
★ TV lounge and coffee & tea making facilities in all rooms
★ Indoor heated swimming pool with sauna and sunbed
★ Entertainment twice weekly
Christmas breaks for mini coaches available
Contact us on

(0803) 551422

NOW TAKING 1991 BOOKINGS

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ESSEX

Kingsley Hotel

MARINE PARADE EAST, CLACTON-ON-SEA, ESSEX CO15 1PT
TELEPHONE (0255) 423158

★ Open all year for tours
★ 32 rooms, some en suite
★ 4 ground floor rooms
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Coach operators call Mrs Gilbert now to discuss requirements

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57 seats, new MoT, suitable contract work.

£6,000 + VAT
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All vehicles in very good condition, spotless inside and out.

All vehicles in ivory and red exterior, matching trim interior.

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53 seater, radio cassette, PA, curtains, diss side lockers, heater, MoT April 1991, speed limiter. **£34,000**

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Power door, new floor, rebuilt engine, tested to May 1991
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2 owners, light-use (Airfield), tested to Nov. 1991
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Both ideal contract vehicles or Owner/Driver
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All vehicles are in excellent condition and have many extras. No reasonable offer refused.
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New test, 12 metre, 53 E-type seats, cherished plates, absolutely excellent condition
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11mtr, 53 seats, side lockers, radio/pa, gangway armrests, driver's fan, owned by us from new, superb vehicle, speed limiter fitted and calibrated, MoT March 1991, must sell before new vehicle arrives.

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10 mtr, 1985, Plaxton Paramount bodywork, MoT certificate Sept 1991, fitted with 38 reclining seats, Telma retarder, fitted to high spec.

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49 Dp seats. Tested May '91 overall, white, excellent condition.

£3,300 ono

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16-seater, 4 standing. Power door, delivery mileage, white. Save thousands **£16,950**

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Power door, 20-seater, 4 standing. Tacho reading 6,000 Klms **£13,950**

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£37,500

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(14324/DA)

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1986 (C) DAF MB200 DKFL Duple Caribbean

TELMA, ZF 6 speed spitter. 46/51 reclining seats, demountable rear sunken toilet, rear servery, water heater, drinks machine, double glazed, carpet to centre aisle, PA system, video. Tested March '91.

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1978 FORD 53-seater Coach

MoT January 1991, **MUST BE SEEN,** only

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23 seater, power doors, very good condition, full size seats, MoT May 1991. **£6,000 + VAT**

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1983 12 MTR LEYLAND TIGER 245

Plaxton Paramount 3500 bodywork, 55 fixed seats, new engine fitted Aug '89, Rockwell back axle, cherished number plates, Telma retarder installation, bodywork in excellent condition.

ARMCHAIR PASSENGER TRANSPORT

Tel. 081 568 8227

(14340/LE)

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248 Plaxton Paramount 3500 bodywork, 49 reclining seats, fitted with Telma retarder, cherished number plates, Sutrak air conditioning, toilet, video, drinks machine, first class condition.

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COACHMART SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

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Finance available for established operators.

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0255 503864 (14361 LEY)

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Semi-auto gearbox, Plaxton Supreme VI express, 57 seats, MoT Feb '91, radio, pa, cassette, power door, blue and maroon, mustard moquette, Bristol dome.

£21,000 + VAT ono

Tel. 0734 713257

(14357/LEY)

1983 (Y) TIGER 245 PLAXTON 3500

ZF gearbox, 48 recliners, rear sunken toilet, curtains, double glazed, Telma, recent repaint, finished in white.

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Contact Eric on 091 517 0177

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47 recliners, semi-automatic, MoT to March 1991.

GREAT WORKHORSE.

£7,950 + VAT

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53 seater, semi-auto, power steering, power door, Mark 4 front, MoT May '91.

£8,500 + VAT

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(14103/LE)

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1980 Private Plate MAN SR280

49 reclining seats, courier seat, toilet, hot drinks machine, fridge, Webasto, continental door, double glazed, air conditioning, MoT April 1991, excellent condition.

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VOLVO B10M, Telma, 1988 'E' reg Plaxton 3500 low driver, GT 4 star specification, 57 reclining seats (49 now fitted), TV/video/stereo, demountable sunken centre toilet, Webasto heating, telephone system, Klix drinks machine, fridge, aircraft lockers, all rubber floor and carpet, special large through luggage lockers and side flaps, airport lights, double-glazed, full draw curtains and sunblinds, driver's bunk, only **£75,000 + VAT**

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Tinted glass, Bristol dome, 53 recovered E-type seats, in Holdsworth moquette. Exterior completely repanelled, excellent condition. Private plates.
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VOLVO

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Plaxton Paramount 3500, 49 seater, full executive, including toilet, TV/video, tea/coffee machine, Telma, double glazing, tested to March 1991.

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NEW MERCEDES 609D, 24 coach seats, power door.

NEW MERCEDES 609D, 26 coach seats, from £26,000 net plus power door, immed delivery.

NEW TRANSIT 20, power door, power steering, air suspension, coach seats, stock.
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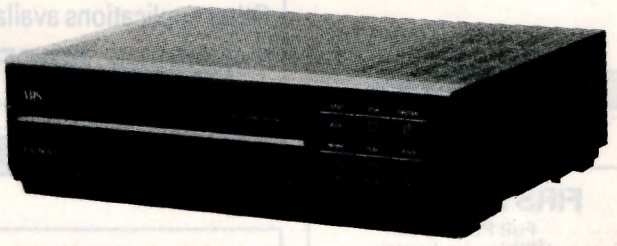

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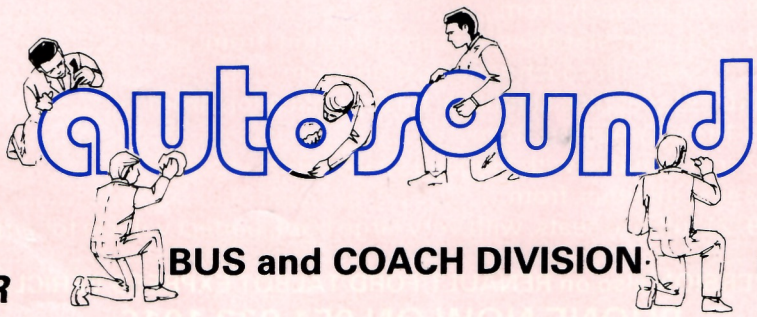

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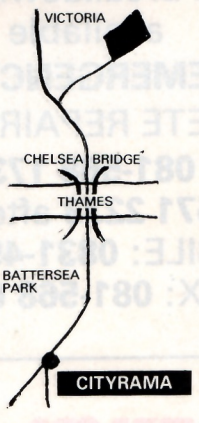

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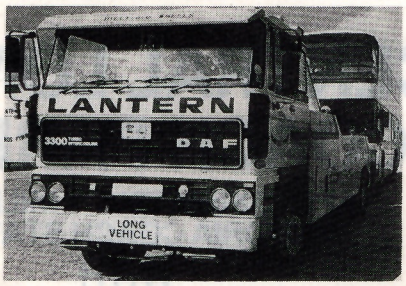

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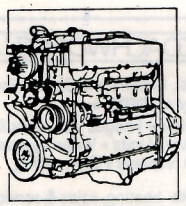

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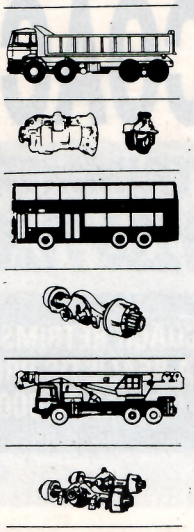

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NOTICE

MR. JIM ROBINSON

Advertisements for Jonckheere Parts and Service recently appeared in **COACHMART** carrying the name of Mr Jim Robinson.

The Publishers wish it to be known that Mr Jim Robinson's name appeared in error.

Mr Robinson, who is employed by Q Drive, who have the AVE Berkhof franchise, has absolutely NO connection with Jonckheere Parts and Service or Club Cantabrica.

The Publishers regret any embarrassment caused by this error.

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Tender forms including full details are available on application to the County Surveyor, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH, and must be returned to the County Solicitor by not later than 3pm on 1st November 1990.

(14375/TE)

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1986 LAG PANORAMIC 'no extras machine', 49 seater, full specification, touring coach.

1986 SETRA 215HD, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet, Cont steps, powered Cont door, wired for water boiler, video equipment, fridge, radio PA & tape, carpet to saloon, centre aisle, curtains to side windows, finished in white with the usual 'Setra' extras.

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1982 DAF PLAXTON SUPREME V, 47 seater, radio, PA, tape, TV/video, tinted glass, power door, toilet, water heater, courier seat, coffee machine and side lockers.

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